



JOURNAL

Mah Meher-Avan-Adar 1376 AY (F) • Mah Ardibehest-Khordad-Tir 1377 AY (Sh) • Mah Khordad-Tir-Amardad 1377 AY (K)

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Zarathushti
youth launch
project to
document
heritage



Preserving the Past

Also Inside:



IMPACT: XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress



New Book "Where Are We Coming From" by Jamshid Pishdadi



Meher Pavri, Crowned Miss Canada-India Beauty Queen

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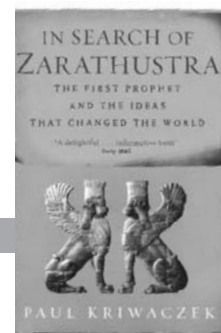
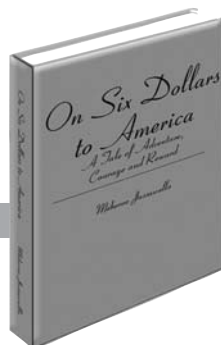
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Framroze Patel, NJJalejar and Rodabeh
Taraporvala (right),
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and Jalajar's brother
Kaikobad with wife Dina
(left), outside family
home in Tarapore**130 Between the cover****Opinions expressed in the FEZANA Journal do not necessarily reflect the
views of FEZANA or members of this publication's editorial board.****Published at Regal Press, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada**

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A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

The role of FEZANA in the Diaspora

How did the 14th North American Zoroastrian Congress, Toronto, impact us in North America, individually and collectively? This issue of the FEZANA Journal reports on the presentations made at the congress; in addition you will read reflections of people young and old as to how it impacted them. But how did the congress impact us collectively, organizationally? Did it make us more aware of the role we, as the North American Zarathushti society, should play in the Diaspora? Did it make us more aware of our responsibility in the Diaspora towards other members of our community?

The congress brought together community leaders from several countries and hearing of the political turmoil of Parsi Politics in Mumbai, and the socio-economic problems faced by our communities in India and Iran made us acutely aware not only of our good fortune in North America, but also of our responsibility towards our community in the rest of the world .

The Zarathushti community in India is particularly confronted with a number of issues that has been the bases for their fragmentations. In the midst of the turmoil of these disputes, disagreements and grand standing of people with their personal agenda, the poor elderly Mobeds who have served the community and the Zarathushti Faith throughout their lives with dedication are sadly overlooked. To address these woes The Parsi Resource Group (PRG), a Public Charitable Trust in Mumbai is promoting the welfare of destitute mobeds through 1. Cashless Mobed Medclaim Insurance Scheme 2. Mobed Pension Scheme 3 Mobed Children Education Scheme.

The North American Mobeds' Council (NAMC) has decided to join hands with PRG in the area of Medclaim Insurance scheme which covers all health insurance with pre-existing diseases including cancer, for 724 mobeds, 389 wives and 222 children. INR 30 lacs is needed to give each family a coverage of INR 2 lacs. The NAMC has started a "Healthcare Fund initiative for destitute Mobeds of India". Dr Ervad Bagli, President of NAMC writes "I appeal to you to unite in this cause to help change the impoverished lifestyle of those who have helped keep the fires of our faith ablaze, and bestow on them a healthy and comfortable living in the winter of their lives."

The FEZANA Welfare committee has started a Sponsorship program to support the education goals of Mobed's children. The chairs of the welfare committee write "Our mobeds deserve our full support, ... we will have a cadre of learned professional mobeds ready to serve our community in North America and across the globe with pride and distinction".

The FEZANA Journal starts with this issue a section (PAGE FROM NAMC) showcasing the activities, writings and achievements of Mobeds of North America, with Ervad Brigadier Behram M Panthaki as the editor. We feel our mobeds deserve the respect and recognition for the unflinching and unconditional service they render to the community.

So the question of impact raised at the 14th N American Congress can be seen in, our slowly building a community without borders, by showing leadership in assuming our role in the Diaspora, in our zeal to make things happen, to make this world a better place for the community to move forward. We respond with our hearts and hands and our pocket books to natural calamities and to heart wrenching accidents (at the time of going to press, over US\$20,000 have been collected for baby Ushta Confectioner, the burn victim).

Putting together each issue of the Journal makes me reflect on our position in the greater global community. The FEZANA Journal has been part of the Zarathushti story on this continent and in the shaping of the Diaspora. It is committed to a community that is confident, generous, vigorous. The stories and images in this oral history section mostly look back, but they also briefly look forward to the future. We have come a long way, but we still have a lot more history to make and record, a lot more Impact to generate.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dolly Dastoor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Read and Send a gift subscription to family and friends

A Message from the President Generation X - The New Leaders

Every generation believes it is going to live differently from the previous one (1). Zarathushtis started coming here from India and Pakistan in the 1960s for post-graduate studies because they wanted better opportunities than were available there at that time. After graduation, they found good jobs, got married, and settled down to raise families. Immersed in a predominantly Judeo-Christian environment, but isolated from their parents and relatives, the immigrant Zarathushtis needed contact with others of their own culture and religion. The first Zarathushti association was founded in Montreal (1967), followed by Vancouver (1968), Toronto (1971), New York (1973), Los Angeles (1974), Chicago (1975), and so on.

The children of this founder generation, born in the 1970s and 1980s, went to the same schools, and experienced many of the same historical events as all the other American kids of their generation, popularly called Generation-X. But unlike most of their friends in school, the Gen-X Zarathushti kids had to straddle two cultures, Parsi-Indian at home, and Judeo-Christian at school. And if their parents were intermarried, they experienced two cultures at home too. They excelled in their schools and extra-curricular activities because their parents valued education and set a good example of honesty, hard work and perseverance.

The founder generation started studying translations of the prayers and the Gathas. Gatha study groups were created. Children's religious education classes were held every month at peoples' homes. Arbab Rustam Guiv foresaw the need for building dar-e-mehrs and provided seed money to several associations to purchase properties. There was a lot of optimism in those days.

Starting in 1975, symposia (which became North American congresses after 1982) were held every two or three years to discuss pressing issues like religious education, calendar reform, and community infrastructure. Study and discussion of scriptures, scholarly articles and papers opened the eyes of many to the underlying ethical teachings and ecologically sound beliefs of our faith. But consensus was difficult because of the passion of many attendees who wanted their beliefs to prevail over others. The youth were watching. They started addressing their own issues.

After 1979, more Zarathushti families arrived from Iran. They enthusiastically joined the associations and introduced a refreshing outlook on religion and religious celebrations that the Parsis had forgotten. But cultural and ideological differences soon made communication difficult. Iranian-Zarathushti associations were formed in Los Angeles in 1980, San Jose in 1981, and New York in 1986. Disputes arose for the control of properties built from Arbab Guiv's donations. By 1987, there were 17 associations in North America. FEZANA was formed as an umbrella organization to address overarching issues in a collaborative spirit, with a mandate to perpetuate the Zarathushti religion in North



year.

Another independent organization, The Zarathushtrian Assembly, was founded in 1990 with the aim of spreading the idea of the universality of Zarathushtra's Gathic message. The Assembly accepts all who study and accept the message of Zarathushtra as members. Many ethnic groups in Asia also claim Zarathushti heritage, and are eager to learn and even revert back to their ancestral religion. These developments have raised some concerns among Parsis in many parts of the world.

Yes, today a large percentage of Gen-X are intermarried; but they and their spouses and children are well accepted in the North American Zarathushti community. Thanks to the efforts of the founding generation, they also know and understand and are able to articulate our religion to the society in which they live. They are well integrated in the North American culture, but are also proud of their roots and appreciate the trials and achievements of their ancestors. They eagerly volunteer to serve the larger communities in which they live and work, and are active in their local Zarathushti Associations and FEZANA committees.

This is the atmosphere in which Gen-X Zarathushtis, now in their 30s and 40s, have grown up. So it should not be surprising that, they may view many issues and their potential solutions very differently from the preceding generations. There is a real need to listen attentively to their ideas and viewpoints. The new leaders must have the authority and the freedom to decide and choose the best course of action for their own futures without fear of censure.

A society is composed of various groups and persons working together in an atmosphere of brotherhood, all fulfilling various roles. The founders have set the stage for establishing our presence in the New World. Now they must recognize the capabilities and zeal of the next generation, who will build the edifices and structures to sustain our religion and bring it into the mainstream of American experience.

God bless our lands, our religion, our mobeds, FEZANA, and all of us!

Rustom Kevala, FEZANA President

¹ Neil Tyson, Why America needs to explore Space

² Richard Weaver, Ideas have Consequences



FEZANA's 20th Anniversary Endowment Fund

As all of us know, FEZANA celebrated its 20th anniversary on June 2, 2007. At the AGM in Dallas in April 07, the need for an office was approved by the Association representatives. On that auspicious day a spontaneous collection of \$10,000 in checks and pledges from the Association representatives and committee chairs was made. The Zoroastrian Associations of Chicago, Houston and New York have all offered space at their centers to FEZANA for a nominal rental fee. To meet recurring costs, FEZANA is setting up a 20th Anniversary Endowment Fund to support the FEZANA office.

Yasmin and William Cumming, of California, have pledged \$50,000 to start the Fund, provided FEZANA can raise \$50,000 within a year to match their donation. **This is where you can help.** Every donation of \$1,000, \$500 or even \$100 will count. Everyone can be part of FEZANA's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Donors of \$25,000 and above will be Founders; donors between \$10,000 to \$25,000 will be Sustainers; donors between \$5,000 to \$10,000 will be Benefactors of the fund. Names of these donors will be proudly displayed at the entrance to the FEZANA office. All donors and their donations will be acknowledged in the FEZANA JOURNAL. So far, we are happy to announce that \$12,000 have been collected towards this matching program. Kindly help us meet the \$50,000 matching program by contributing to this worthy cause.

4th World Youth Congress, Ballarat, Australia

FEZANA continues to encourage and help our youth to reach their goals in life.

FEZANA made a pledge to help students attend the 4th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in Ballarat, Australia starting December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008. Each eligible candidate from any of the North American Associations will be given \$250 by their Association and by FEZANA, totaling \$500 to each youth.

On the international level, Meher Amalsad of California along with the help of Firdosh Mehta of Texas took on a great project to assist youth from Iran to attend the congress. With their hard work and perseverance, and the generosity of the Zarathushtis of North America, Iranian youth will be able to attend the congress. I would like to thank the following donors who made this possible:

Aban and Purvez Rustomji \$100, Sandra and Farrokh Kheradi \$100, Pika International Inc. \$1,000, Dr. Daryoush Jahanian \$2,000, Ambassador Jamshid and Arnaz Marker \$2,000, Farangis Zardoshty \$4,000, anonymous donor \$12,000, ZAGBA \$100, ZANT \$550, ZSBC \$1,000, ZAGNY \$2,000, ZAH \$2,000, ZSO \$2,000, Arbab Rustam-Guiv Foundation \$2,000 and IZA \$8,000. **(Total amount collected \$38,850.)**

Donations of IRA Rollover to FEZANA funds

As per email correspondence from Homi Gandhi please read the following:

"Taxpayers age 70 ½ and older are required to make annual distributions from their retirement accounts. The distributions are included in the taxpayers' adjusted gross income (AGI), and taxpayers pay taxes on them. The Charitable IRA Rollover permits taxpayers to make donations directly to charitable organizations from their IRAs without counting them as part of their AGI and, consequently, without paying taxes on them. As FEZANA is a registered qualified charitable organization, Zarathushtis donating directly to FEZANA funds will benefit, even if those who do not itemize deductions on their annual income tax returns and therefore do not receive a tax benefit for their charitable contributions. The only limitation is that you can do this, only in 2007 and only up to \$100,000 per taxpayer. Please consult with your tax advisor."

The continued generosity of the Zarathushti community of North America is making all these projects and endeavors possible. We are helping to make dreams come true for the deserving Zarathushti youth of the world. We continue to help and make the world a better place for the Zarathushti community. May Ahura Mazda bless you and your families with good health and prosperity.

Kindly make your donation check payable to FEZANA, indicate the fund you support and mail to Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer, 3 Preamble Drive, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054. You can also make secure online donations at FEZANA.org. Thank you for your continuous support.

Jerry Kheradi,, MD, FACG, Chairperson, FEZANA Funds and Finance

Committee: Katayun Kapadia, Treasurer, Rashid Mehin, Behram Irani, Celeste Kheradi





FINANCIAL

Donations Received - April 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007

	Amount in US\$
FEZANA 20th. Anniversary Endowment Fund (Infrastructure)	
Yasmin & William Cumming, Santa Rosa, CA	\$50,000
Zoroastrian Association of Northern California (ZANC)	\$2,000
Celeste & Dr. Jerry Kheradi, North Providence, RI	\$1,001
Pearline & Sarosh Collector, League City, TX, Joann & Soli Dastur, University Park, FL, H B & Burjis Shroff, Boca Raton, FL.	\$501
Zenobia & Sharookh Lala, Farmington Hills, MI, Banoo Karanjia, Mount Laurel, NJ, Lovji Cama, Tenafly, NJ, Dhun Mehta, Albritton, Easton, PA	\$251
Kathleen & Phiroz Rivetna, Scottsdale, AZ, Dinaz & Roomy Irani, Orlando, FL, Zinaida & Adil Engineer, Santa Clara, CA, Roshan & Zarir Sethna, Houston, TX, Ayesha Nariman, Williamsville, NY, Kandra & Minoo Rao, Linwood, MI, Naju & S F Tavaria, Schuylkill Haven, PA, Bakhti Sinor, Lancaster, PA, Bapsy Sidhwa, Houston, TX, Anoo Randelia, San Francisco, CA.	\$101
Freny & Adi Gandhi, Los Angeles, CA, H J & Virginia Tata, Monroeville, PA, Hilla & Darius Antia, Roslyn Heights, NY, Dolly Kerawalla, Laguna Woods, CA, Michiko & Khershed Cooper, Fairfax, VA, Stephany & Viraf Ghadially, Marlboro, NJ.	\$51
TOTAL	\$56,584
General Fund	
Aspi Bharucha, Cincinnati, OH, Farhad Daroga, Broken Arrow, OK	\$101
Khushroo Dastur, Northbrook, IL, Marzban Marzbani, Farmingdale, NY	\$61
Hoshang Khambatta, San Diego, CA	\$40
Mr. & Mrs. Viraf Darukhanawalla, Hoffman Estates, IL, M. Dustoor, Grand Rapids, MI, Rustom Kasad, San Diego, CA	\$25
TOTAL	\$438
Welfare Fund	
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington DC (ZAMWI)	\$1,261
Navroz Gandhi, Annapolis, MD, Yazmin & S E Pavri, Kingwood, TX	\$501
Parvin Dinyarian, San Antonio, TX	\$200
Cainaz Vakharia, Silver Spring, MD	\$151
Khursheed & Barjor Dastur, Spring, TX, Nazneen Challa & Mehlie Warden, Sugarland, TX, Farangis Zardoshty, Scottsdale, AZ	\$101
Darius Dubash, Canton, GA, Percy & Rusi Patel, Sugarland, TX, Arzin & Sorab Italia, Houston, TX, Mike Engineer, Stafford, TX	\$100
Scheherazade & Adi Unwala, Ball Ground, GA	\$75
Lillian Bharucha, Houston, TX, Beeni & Neville Billimoria, Alpharetta, GA, Smita & Kersi Edulji, Houston, TX	\$51
TOTAL	\$3,541
Critical Assistance Fund	
Navroz Gandhi, Annapolis, MD	\$500
Dilshad & Kersey Antia, Orland Park, IL (Surat Floods)	\$101
Firoz Mistry, South Windsor, CT	\$50
TOTAL	\$651
Academic Scholarship Fund	
Yasmin & S.E. Pavri, Kingwood, TX	\$500
Bella Tata, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada	\$100
Sharmeen Shroff, San Francisco, CA	\$72
TOTAL	\$672
Religious Education	
Pervin Bhathena, Caledon, Ontario, Canada	\$50
Nariosang Poonawalla, Bonn, Germany	\$30
TOTAL	\$80



FINANCIAL

Donations Received- April 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007

Journal Fund

Keky Dastur, Karachi, Pakistan

Rohinton Katgara, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

TOTAL

Amount in US\$

\$30

\$80

Kheradi Endowment Scholarship Fund

Delara & Matthew Lungen, Nyack, NY

TOTAL

\$100

\$100

Junglawala Lecture Series

Jasmin & Firdaus Bhatena, Andover, MA, Noshir, Marion, Jim Hormuzdiar, Danbury, CT, Gina & Rustam Devitre, Boston, MA, Celeste & Dr. Jerry Kheradi, North Providence, RI

\$501

Rutty & Adi Guzdar, Framingham, MA

\$401

Roxane & Yezdi Dordi, Mason, OH, Colin M Quinn, River Edge, NJ

\$250

Usha & Jayanti Patel, Wesley Hills, NY, Lin TV, Providence, RI, Burjor Wadia, Pune, India

\$201

Jehan & Frey Bagli, Mississ, Ontario, Canada, Barbara & Kavsy Dastoor, Yorklyn, DE, Yasmin & Jamshed Ghadiali, Baldwin, NY, Dhiraj & Raj Jhaveri, Framingham, MA, Rita & Jamshed Kapadia, Carlisle, MA, Roda, Khushroo & Ferzin Patel, Lawrence, NY, Bella Tata, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Linda & James Bodoi, Sudbury, MA, Christine & Max Anderson, Westford, MA, Manjula & Ravji Brahmhatt, Paramus, NJ, Niloufer & Edul Daver, Green Brook, NJ, Gulestan & Farrokh Deboo, New Canaan, CT, Katie Irani, Houston, TX, Elizabeth & Brett Morris, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Sumita & Amul Patel, Hartsdale, NY, Kumud Ami, Shalish, Anis, Sonya & Sheena Shah, Parlin, NJ, Dory & Paul/YAI Smaller, Tarrytown, NY

\$101

Alethea & Martin Chow, Glen Cove, NY

\$75

Zerlina & Philip Dubois, Mason, OH, Khursheed & Shailendra Dusaj, Towaco, NJ, Rustom Guzdar, Arlington, VA, Piloc & Firoz Mistry, South Windsor, CT, Farshid Bakhtyari, Newton, MA, Donna & Ed Briand, Whitinsville, MA, Denise & George Chou, Newtonville, MA, Dr. Richard Cohen & Family, New York, NY, Barbara & James Evans, Shrewsbury, MA, Khorshed & Keky Mistry, Palm coast, FL, Dilnavaz & Hoshang Shroff, Belmont, MA, Kerri & Andy Singh, Exeter, NH, Somsak Vanichpong, Pomona, NY, Rashna Wadia, San Jose, CA.

\$51

Arnaz B. Maneckshana, Hackensack, NJ, Edul Nakra, Brighton, MA, Valerie Gaus, Huntington, NY, Navaz & Rohinton Katki, Dobbs Ferry, NY, Barbara & Curtis Deutsch, South Boston, MA, Juleann M Springle, New Providence, NJ, Arlene & Harry Yarwood, Floral Park, NY, Shiraz Antia & Zarir Unvala, Norwalk, CT.

\$35

Total

\$6,212

Donations for sending Zarathusti Iranian Youth to 4th. WZYC

Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY)

\$2,000

Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)

\$2,000

Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC)

\$1,000

Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT)

\$550

Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston (ZAGBA)

\$101

TOTAL

\$5,651

Other Donations for 4WZYC

Pika International Inc., Stafford, TX

\$1,000

Aban & Purvez Rustomji, Houston, TX

\$100

TOTAL

\$1,100

Donations for World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra (WZSO) at Toronto Congress

Dinyar Mehta, Kissimmee, FL, Firdosh Mehta, Weatherford, TX, Arnavaz & Adi Vakharia, Flower Mound, TX, Rashna Mehta, Weatherford, TX, Dhunmai & Phiroze Dalal, Los Angeles, CA, Soli Engineer, Cedar Park, TX, Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, Houston, TX, Purvez Rustomji, Houston, TX, Anahita & Firoze Sidhwa, Coppell, TX.

\$101

Kashmira & Kavay Mistry, Roanoke, TX, Sherazade Mehta, Dallas, TX

\$50

Total

\$1,004

TOTAL DONATION RECEIVED April-June 2007

\$76,113

Bequeathment of Religious Books

FEZANA NAMED IN WILLBY DR. ERVAD JEHAN BAGLI

Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli has bequeathed his entire collection of religious books on Zarathushti Faith and others to FEZANA in his will. Dr. Bagli has suggested that FEZANA undertake a project to initiate a 'Central Library for Zoroastrian Studies' either by itself or as a part of Zoroastrian Cultural Center as earlier suggested by Mr. Homi Gandhi.

As you know, we are in the midst of deciding on the location of the FEZANA office. An endowment fund has been created for funding its expenses. The next step for the Infrastructure Working Group will be to study and recommend the need and work out the details for various other community facilities and properties for North America. Dr. Bagli and Mr. Gandhi's suggestions for initiating a Central Library and Research Center for Zoroastrian Studies come at a very opportune time.

Donations made to FEZANA are fully tax-deductible for U.S.A. taxpayers. Canadians can make tax-deductible donations to FEZANA through the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO), who will deposit the donations in a special FEZANA account and provide the needed receipts to the donors.

One of the most popular modes of donations has been the donation of appreciated securities. The full appreciated value of the securities at the time of donation is counted as a tax deduction, regardless of the actual purchase price. Similarly, stocks, securities, coin or stamp collections, art collections, real estate, or any other valuable assets received as part of an inheritance can be passed on directly to the charity without selling them, to receive the maximum tax deduction benefit.

Another very good method for making donations is to name the charity as a beneficiary in a will and/or life insurance policy. Two past ZAGNY presidents, Ivy and Farrokh Gandhi, had ZAGNY as beneficiary and their legacy has been left behind as part of ZAGNY's Scholarship fund.

Several types of trusts can be created in a will or estate to leave a legacy for any charitable purpose, while providing also for the family during or after one's lifetime. This can best be accomplished through an estate lawyer or tax attorney.

Please contact Dr. Jerry Kheradi or Dr. Rustom Kevala to discuss your wishes for bequeathments or donations to our community for specific causes.

\$50,000 needed to turn a Dream into Reality for Phase I of the Centre for the Zarathushtis of North Texas (ZANT).

Since 1992 the Zarathushtis of North Texas have been raising funds to build a ZANT Centre. In November 2006, 2.6 acres property was purchased for \$253,000 in cash. Total construction cost to build the prayer room and other amenities specially designed by architect Cyrus Rivetna will cost \$906,000.

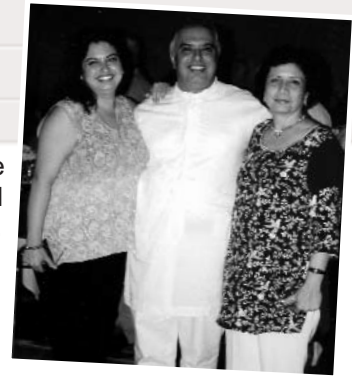
Construction for Phase 1 of the Centre focusing on the spiritual, educational and cultural aspects of the religion will start January 1, 2008 at a cost of \$600,000. ZANT has cash and pledges for \$550,000. They need \$50,000 to start and complete by August 2008.

Please donate generously and make checks to **ZANT Building Fund** and mail to

ZANT, P.O. Box 271117, Flower Mound, TX 75027

<http://www.zant.org/Center.htm>

Critically Speaking



The Critical Assistance Committee, a subcommittee of the FEZANA Welfare committee, is designed **to provide assistance to individuals, families and organizations facing temporary difficulties due to medical emergencies, natural disasters, violence, or legal issues.**

Outlined below is a brief sampling of the types of cases addressed by the critical assistance committee:

1. Hospitals aiding in Zarathushti health issues in need of Medical Equipment.
2. Low Income families w/ sick children and no Medical Insurance (life threatening illnesses).
3. Immigration issues causing immediate family separation.
4. Natural disasters that cause family displacement and affect livelihood. Example: Surat Floods & Hurricane Katrina.
5. Recovery from Terrorist Acts. Example: Bombay Train.
6. Situations of domestic and familial violence.
7. Widows w/o job skills, needing to re-build their lives.
8. Agiyaries that would be forced to close and are the only places of worship for Parsis in their towns.
9. Low Income families suffering losses of child(ren) needing assistance with funeral expenses.

The committee chairs **Houtoxi Contractor** of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and **Hosi Mehta of Chicago**, Illinois started with only an idea in 2002 and because of clear objectives, defined goals and an understanding of what the community needed, the Critical Assistance Committee has partnered beautifully with the Welfare Committee to provide consistent legal, social, medical and educational assistance over the past 6 years.

Today we find ourselves at a cross roads where our committee is being asked once again, through appeals received by our Zarathushti brethren, to push our boundaries further and to educate our community members on the need to include services that address:

The needs of the physically and mentally challenged:

In the recent past we have received requests for assistance with education, medical treatment and better living conditions for young people suffering from Cerebral Palsy. We have also worked with a victim of domestic violence who has a child suffering from autism. We are trying to build a plan and a support structure to better meet these needs, so that we may more adequately address the needs of others as they come our way.

Mentoring:

Mentoring over the years has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to keep children in school, assist people in starting businesses etc. Currently we have been providing support and in effect mentoring those who need assistance from our committee. We, as a team of three, have learned a great deal from this process about the situation at hand, working together and how gratifying it can be to see someone succeed. We would like to extrapolate this theory to providing "mentors" to those in need with others who have successfully come through the situation the "victim" is currently experiencing.

Support required by those who want to make an impact in their local or global communities:

There are many in our community who want to step up and help make humanity better, with education, awareness, medicine and hygiene, to provide the courage to dream of a better life and create a better future for children who have nothing to look forward to in life in India and in war torn places all over the world including Africa, Iraq and Palestine. We are looking to see how we can support these folks in bringing their good thoughts to fruition.

If you would like to assist our committee by providing your professional services, financial support or would just like to volunteer your time to provide social support to members in need we invite you to **please call us and join our family of volunteers and donors.** Until next time....Ushta-té (may happiness be unto you always),

Houtoxi Contractor -- 412-367-2948 or HFM31@aol.com

Hosi Mehta -- 630-833-6923 or hosimehta@aol.com

Freyaz Shroff -- +91-98922-73973(in Bombay) or freycz@aol.com

"Believe in the strength that comes from one hand holding another through times of trouble..."

-Anonymous

Appeal - Revitalize Our Community One Mobed at a Time

The FEZANA Welfare Committee is supporting organizations and individuals undertaking projects to support education programs as they relate to our professional Mobeds.

We believe the priests in our Zarathushti community need our assistance to grow strong. Many suffer financially as a result of lack of complete education. Many want to change the fate of their children, but are unable to financially do so. Education is where we need to begin for all our priests young and old. As a first step, we would like to provide funding that would support the educational goals of Mobeds' children. It would work much like a Sponsorship program.

The immediate impact provided by these funds will be to help the Mobeds to worry less about finances for the proper education of their children, and allow them to give more attention to religious needs of the community. As the program continues to grow, and more assistance is provided to such families, giving them financial freedom, Mobeds will also be able to spend more time helping to support our community. A positive change in the everyday life of a Mobed is perhaps the most encouraging element in convincing more children of Mobeds to follow in their fathers' footsteps, thereby making a lasting impression for future generations.

Our Mobeds deserve our full support. As we develop the habit of supporting our current Mobeds, we will ensure that one day soon, we will also have a cadre of learned professional Mobeds who will be ready to serve our community in North America and across the globe with pride and distinction.

The FEZANA Welfare Committee is looking to the community to help in providing the financial assistance needed in order to start this sponsorship program. A donation of U.S. \$2.00 per day is sufficient to provide support for one Mobed's child. We encourage any and all to provide whatever donation they can towards this noble effort. All we ask is that you please pledge an amount that you are able and comfortable to contribute each and every month on a consistent basis. Please know that multiple donors can co-sponsor a child, or an entire association can sponsor a child.

A volunteer would donate U.S. \$60 per month (that is only U.S. \$2 per day) that would go towards the child's education.

The Zoroastrian Association of Pittsburgh (ZAPA) has already pledged its support in assisting one youth. The members of ZAPA have also independently joined together

to sponsor a second child for one year. We would like to encourage associations and individuals alike for support.

To Sponsor a Child, please send the following information to HPMC31@aol.com, hosimehta@aol.com; freyaz@aol.com:

1. Your Name
2. Your Mailing Address
3. Your Day & Evening Telephone Numbers
4. Your Email Address
5. Your MONTHLY Pledge Amount

We invite you to join us in this great effort & truly help preserve our community **ONE MOBED AT A TIME**

Please mail your US dollar checks payable to: 'FEZANA WELFARE' marked Children/Edu fund

Attention: Katayun Kapadia ;

3 Preamble Drive; Mount Laurel; N. J. 08054

Please mail your Canadian dollar checks payable to 'ZSO' with a memo Children/ Edu fund.

Attention: Zoroastrian Society of Ontario;

3590 Bay view Ave; Toronto;

Ontario, Canada M2M3S6

For further information please contact:

Hosi Mehta at hosimehta@aol.com or 630-279-0566

Houtoxi Contractor at HPMC31@aol.com or 412-367-2948

Freyaz Shroff at freyaz@aol.com or +91-98922-73973 (Mumbai)

**Read
and
Send a gift subscription to
family and friends**

A Message from the Zoroastrian Youth of North America



THE Z YOUTH MUSIC MOVEMENT

The goal of the Z Youth Music Movement is to achieve a new generation of faith-based music for the youth of the Zarathushti community. We are looking for those individuals who will either write lyrics for faith-based songs, compose these songs, or even willing to sing. It should be fun and should be contemporary. We want music that is "catchy." Words need to be in English, easy to pronounce, understand and sing with lyrics that can be set to music that appeal to the younger generation such as pop, hip hop, rap etc.

Deadline: September 1, 2007

Please send your lyrics, questions, or comments to Freyaz Shroff

Phone : +91- 98922-73973 (Bombay Mobile)

Email: freyaz@aol.com

You can also visit the ZYNA website for more detailed information – www.fezana.org/zyna.htm

NEXT GENERATION CHALLENGES CONFERENCE

Do you care about the future of your community? What kind of world will you shape for your kids? **October 12-14, 2007** the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, in conjunction with ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America), will host the first in a series of Next Generation Conferences designed to strengthen and perpetuate our Zarathushti communities by stimulating inter-generational dialogue, cultivating leadership, and paving a path for real world problem solving. How can you make a difference in your community?

To learn more about the Next Generation conference, please contact: Tinaz Dhunjisha 630.740.5343, tdhunjisha@gmail.com; Jim Engineer 630.728.1387, jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com, or NikanKhatibi 49.842.9628, nikan2@aol.com

COME JOIN JIMMY AND ME.....

ZYNA is committed to basic human rights and social justice for all. Please come join Jimmy Carter and myself for a week long of laughter, fun, and camaraderie as we build houses for low-income families in Los Angeles, CA. This five-day event will not only provide housing for families who only

ZYNA

Chairman: Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA

Board of Delegates:

Farzin Avari (AZA); Zain Mavalvala (ZSBC); Shireen Cama (ZAGBA); Farzin Morena (ZAC); Ferzeen Chapgar (ZANC); Ramin Shahriari (CZC);

Anahita Khosraviani (PZO); Tinaz Dhunjisha (ZAC); Keyarash Jahanian (ZAK);

Farah Panthakee (ZSO); Rita Balaporia (ZAPA); Tina Mehta (ZAPANJ); Gustad Mody (ZAGNY); Dustyn Shroff (ZAF); Arash Ardeshiricham (ZAA)

dreamt of owning a home, but will increase awareness of a very real American housing crisis and a long-term commitment for action from community leaders and individuals to resolve it.

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Date of Event: October 28-November 2, 2007

Food and Housing: Sponsorship will be available

To embark on this unprecedented event, please contact ZYNA at nikan2@aol.com to receive an informational packet.

THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH CONGRESS – AUSTRALIA

December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008; The congress organizers are promising a fun filled event so don't miss your chance to be a part of this historic event. Visit the ZYNA website for more details.

ZYNA and FEZANA are subsidizing 17 youth from North America to attend the Congress.

ZOROASTRIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (ZYLC)

This conference offers talented young people the most authentic leadership opportunities in a real world setting today by testing abilities, improving confidence, and developing skills in a dynamic, hands-on atmosphere that will be both challenging and fun. ZYLC is expected to be held in 2008 – stay tuned for details.



Calendar of Festivals

September 2007 to March 2008

Fravardian Jashan <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin</i>	Wed, Aug 8 Fri, Sep 7	(K) (S)
Maidyozarem Gahambar <i>Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Thurs, Aug 30-Mon Sept 3 Sat, Sep 29-Wed, Oct 03	(K) (S)
Paitishem Gahambar <i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad Aneran</i>	Wed, Sep 12- Sun, Sep 16	(F)
Jashne-Mehergan <i>Mah Meher, Roz Meher</i>	Tues, Oct 02	(F)
Ayathrem Gahambar <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Fri, Oct 12-Tues, Oct 16	(F)
Jashne-Avangan(Avan Ardivisur Parab) <i>Mah Avan, Roz Avan</i>	Fri, Oct 26	(F)
Maidyoshem Gahambar <i>Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher</i>	Mon, Oct 29-Fri, Nov. 02 Wed, Nov 28-Sun, Dec 02	(K) (S)
Jashne-Adargan <i>Mah Adar, Roz Adar</i>	Sat, Nov 24	(F)
Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra <i>Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed</i>	Wed, Dec 26	(F)
Maidhyarem Gahambar <i>Mah Dae, Roz Meher-Bahram</i>	Mon, Dec 31-Fri, Jan 04	(F)
Jashne Daegan <i>Mah Dae, Roz Daepdin</i>	Mon, Jan 07	(F)
Jashne Bahmangan <i>Mah Bahman, Roz Bahman</i>	Tues, Jan 16	(F)
Paitishem Gahambar <i>Mah Sheherevar, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Sat, Jan 12 - Wed, Jan 16 Mon, Feb 11 - Fri, Feb 15	(K) (S)
Jashne Sadeh <i>Mah Bahman, Roz Meher</i>	Wed, Jan 30	(F)
Ayatherem Gahambar <i>Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad-Aneran</i>	Mon, Feb 11-Fri, Feb 15 Wed, Mar 13 - Sun, Mar 17	(K) (S)
Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gaham <i>Five Gatha days</i>	Sat, Mar 16-Wed, Mar 20	(F)
Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year) <i>Tuesday Prior to NauRooz</i>	Tues, Mar 19	(F)
NauRooz or Jamshedi NauRooz (New Year) <i>Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd</i>	Thur, Mar 21	(F)

Greetings from Australia on the 20th Anniversary of FEZANA

It seems like only yesterday that I had sent my last message of felicitations during FEZANA's 10th Anniversary.

I trust that the togetherness of your many Associations will result in some congenial concord. There does remain some lingering anger when opposite views are presented. Within that rage, I believe, there will always be something productive - indeed, there is plenty of energy in such dialectic phenomena, which can be harnessed for good. The thoughtful mind ponders over the harsh words and irrational events as the dust settles.

It is only when we, as followers of Zarathushtra, reflect the destructive forces on to ourselves that we, subconsciously deny who we really are.

Among the global settlements outside our birth land I truly hold that the dynamic North American settlements will continue to build a lasting, progressive Zarathushti way of life for future generations.

My sincere 'salaams' to Rohinton Rivetna, Dolly Dastoor, Framroze Patel, Firdosh Mehta, Rustom Kevala and many more dedicated workers who, cherishing human values and ancient wisdoms, have weathered the buffetings and remained unmoved.

Sincerely

Sam Kerr, Sydney Australia

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Zarathushti
youth launch
project to
document
heritage





COMING EVENTS

2007 YEAR OF RUMI declared by UNESCO at the request of the GOVERNMENT OF TAJIKISTAN to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Mevlana Celaled-din-i Belhi-Rumi (Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Balkhi Rumi), Persian poet and philosopher (1207-1273 CE). A float, highlighting the contributions of Rumi was at the Persian Parade in New York to celebrate Naurooz, March 2007.

SEPTEMBER 2007 1st World Zarathushti Trade, Industrial & Cultural Fair. TEHRAN organized by WZCC Iran Region. All intending participants should directly contact Khodayar Attaie, irantradefair@gmail.com. WZCC Regional Chapter Chair with their business activities and their space requirement.

SEPTEMBER 2007 MIDDAY NGO Workshop

Faith Responses to Climate Change, sponsored by The Episcopal Church. Thursday, 6 September 2007. Homi Gandhi, Main UN Representative of FEZANA NGO in consultation with ECOSOC will be a speaker.

OCTOBER 2007 NEXT GENERATION CHALLENGES CONFERENCE, CHICAGO

The Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, in conjunction with ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America), will host the first in a series of Next Generation Conferences, October 12-14, 2007. Contact: tdhunjisha@gmail.com, jim.engineer@e-rainmaker.com, nikan2@aol.com

OCTOBER 19-21 2007 HOUSTON

The Library Committee of the Houston Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Centre will host Paul Kriwaczek, author of "In search of Zarathushtra" (see review pg 130 October 19 and 21, 2007). Contact aban@coatingengineers.com

DECEMBER 2007, WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS, BALLARAT, AUSTRALIA.

The FOURTH World Zoroastrian Youth Congress "Back to the Future" will be held at the University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008. Contact Shiraz Mistry, at Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au

JANUARY 2008, WZCC AGM, MUMBAI/PUNE, INDIA

The 2007 Annual General Meeting of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce will be held in MUMBAI/PUNE, January 13th and 14th. Members are advised to arrive in Mumbai on January 12, 2008 and departure should be planned for Jan 15, 2008. Contact zcommisariat@hotmail.com

JANUARY 2008 "COMING TOGETHER ROUNDTABLE"

will be held in Mumbai, January 15, at the Mancherji Joshi Athornan Madressa Hall, Dadar. Leaders from all Zarathushti organizations worldwide and any interested persons are invited to "Come Together and Work Together" on issues/challenges/projects for our Worldwide Zarathushti Community Without Borders. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com."

MAY 2008 FEZANA AGM, CALIFORNIA {CZC}

The Annual General Meeting of FEZANA will be held May 8, 2008 in Los Angeles, hosted by the California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC).

MAY 2008 RELIGIONS FOR PEACE, EUROPE

Major International Symposium Encounter 2008, will bring together 200 religious representatives to address challenges such as cultural and national identity, economic disparity, and lack of community cohesion. Contact: wcrp@btconnect.com Leadership

provided by Mr. Jehangir Sarosh, President of Religions for Peace-Europe.

JULY 2008, ELEVENTH ZARATHUHSTI GAMES, SAN DIEGO, CA.

The eleventh Zarathushti games will be held the 4th of July weekend 2008 in San Diego. See more at <http://www.sandiego.org/nav/Visitors>.

SUMMER 2008, FEZANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

University of Missouri, Kansas City, Details to follow. Contact Nikan2@aol.com

DECEMBER 2009, WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI.

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time" to be held in Dubai, December 28-31, 2009. Contact meher_bhesania@hotmail.com



DECEMBER 2009 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The 2009 Parliament Embracing Difference, Transforming the world. will be an international inter religious gathering spanning seven nights and six days – from December 3rd to 9th – bringing together an estimated 8,000 to 12,000 persons. Visit: <http://www.cpwr.org/index.html>

IMPACT

Unleash the Spark Within
TORONTO
2007

For four days June 30 to July 2, 2007, the Sheraton Parkway North Hotel, located in Toronto, was resonating with voices in English, Gujarati, Farsi as 500 + Zarathushtis of all ages and persuasion were discussing the Congress "Impact-Unleash the Spark Within". They were from Canada, United States, India, Pakistan, Dubai, England, Australia., United Arab Republic, a real cross section of the Diaspora, rushing from room to room to attend as many sessions as possible. There were 28 sessions catering to the needs of all: the youth, seniors, women, journalists, artists, musicians, historians, entrepreneurs (selling their wares as well). There were several firsts: the inaugural lecture of the Jungalwala Lecture Series, delivered by Prof Kaikhosrov D Irani; the "Meet the Titans" an innovative interactive videoconference. The official unveiling of a world wide Zoroastrian Mentoring project generated interest and support from other organizations viz WZCC, ZWIN, Youth Leadership Enhancement program.

The sessions covered a very wide variety of subjects with younger and different speakers, art of self expression (youth only), the FEZANA Award ceremony, followed by a

presentation on the structure and function of FEZANA. "Show me the money," an extremely informative session on Persian Coins as historical artifacts, a "singles" session, discussing the realities of finding Zarathushti partners in North America, "lights camera action" and "a novel idea" where some of our rising stars provided insights and discussed the difficulties and successes they encountered in their professions. A session with inspirational and motivated young Zarathushtis who have made an impact through their voluntary and charitable efforts in the world around them, a holistic approach to health care specially for seniors. A panel of young and dynamic entrepreneurs presented valuable insights and shared their experiences.

The social life was impacted as well. Starting with the dinner and entertainment of the Persian Night, to the highlight of the congress, the glamorous and enchanting Gala evening of fun and frolic, on Saturday night, featuring Zarathushti talents, in voice and dance and the FEZANA sponsored orchestra. Informal visits to the Dar-e Mehr for lunch and a barbeque on the grounds of OZCF made the visit to Toronto complete.

In the following pages we will present a photo documentary of the congress, summary reports on the Jungalwala inaugural lecture, "Zoroastrian Philosophy and Culture", World Religions and Zoroastrianism the "World Wide Mentoring", and reflective reports of what impact the congress had and should make, "At Home Abroad" (Behram Pastakia) and "Perspectives on the Zarathushti Diaspora in North America" (Jesse Palsetia)

Photo acknowledgement :
Ervad Soli Dastur, and Mr
Jimmy Dholoo



Top Row Congress Impact Team; Representatives of FEZANA member associations

Middle Row Five FEZANA Presidents cutting anniversary cake; Daraius Bharucha, Congress Program Chair, Tehmtan Arjani, Rashna Mehta, Yasmin Pavri at the FEZANA Booth

Bottom Row The Titans : Ratan Tata, Nadir Godrej, Byram Avari, Moderator Minoo Shroff, Lord Karan Billimoria.

Bottom Row



- 1 Daraius Bharucha, Dr Dolly Dastoor, Bella Tata, Dr Pouru Bhiwandiwalla, Farrokh Namdaran
- 2 Dr Jehan Bagli, Mr Satish Mehta, Consul General of India, Sam Vesuna, President ZSO
- 3 Dr Natalie and Rusi Gandhi
- 4 Group having fun

- 5 Phee Vania, Congress Chair, Hon Gerry Phillips, Minister of Government Services, Ontario, Dr Dhun Noria, Gala Banquet Chair,
- 6 Alayar Dabestani with friends
- 7 Visiting Zarathushtis from Australia
- 8 Zarine Chenoy, Congress Vice-Chair, Sam Vesuna, ZSO President, Mehroo Chothia, Congress Vice chair



Interfaith Influences and Interactions with Zoroastrianism

Moderator Rohinton Rivetna

Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Daraius Bharucha, Program Chair of the Congress and Chair of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's Religious Education Committee, Vice-Chair of the Interfaith Committee, traced the parallels between the Zarathushti religion and Judaism and how Judaic thought developed in the post exilic period, after Cyrus the Great released the Jews from Assyrian captivity in Babylon. He discussed ideas that surfaced prominently in the post-exilic period: viz Concept of God; Angelology and Demonology; Heaven and Hell; Resurrection; Ritual Purity Laws ; The Dead Sea Scrolls.

Influences of Zoroastrianism on Christianity. Dr. Gayle Gibson a member of the Education Department at the Royal Ontario Museum where she teaches courses in history, anthropology, and the history and iconography of religions, very cleverly traced the influences as evidenced in early Christian paintings depicting new thoughts that had to have come from the Zarathushti religion, regarding: Forces of Good and Forces of Evil; Heaven and Hell ; Pictures showing balancing of life (a heart) with Truth and Justice; The Great Battle at the end of time; The Final Judgment.

The Roman soldiers were followers of Mithras (or Meher), the deity of Contracts. Aspects of Zoroastrianism appear in Mithraic iconography, and thence in Christianity: She showed Christian paintings of a "bridge" crossing over into the next life. Ideas from Manichaeism and Urbanism also trickled into Europe, and there was a re-introduction of Zarathushti thought into Christianity. St. Francis of Assisi said: "What matters is Right Thought and Right Action."

Interactions of Zoroastrianism and Islam. Dr. Jamsheed Choksy , Professor of Central Eurasian Studies, Professor of History, and Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. covered aspects of what happened in Medieval Iran when Muslims began to take over, with the Arab conquest. He focused on the 7th to 15th centuries.

Conversion to Islam was not a rapid process. Historical records show where the conquest met little military resistance; relations between the conquerors and the conquered people gradually settled down to stable co-existence. In the Caspian region, West of the Oxus, the major battleground between the two religions, the process lasted several hundred years. During the Military Phase (632 - 700 CE), conversion was limited to a small number of military personnel.

During the 8th - 10th centuries, Muslim missionizing was strong in the urban areas where Iranian Zarathushtis and Arab soldiers were garrisoned, and about 80% were converted to Islam in the urban areas.

During the 10th to 13th centuries, one can track conversion in the villages. After 1250 ACE, 80% of the country was Sunni Muslim. The decline of Zarathushti institutions, the community and the religion parallels the rise of Muslim institutions and religion, as Mosques were established and Fire Temples were declining.

Dr. Choksy concluded that the process of confessional and institutional shift from the religion of Zarathushtira to Islam was a long, slow process of over 600 years. It was a multi-faceted process, some accepting Islam through military conflict, some for financial reasons, and some through belief.



From left Daraius Bhaucha, moderator Rohinton Rivetna, Dr Gayle Gibson, Dr Jamsheed Choksy



Congress

Show Me The Money

Homi Gandhi



Dr. Keall, specialist in the archeology of Parthian and Sassanian periods, began his very informative and enlightened presentation on the origins of coinage. A slide presentation of different coins minted in different metals took us through the history of early coins dating back to King Midas, circa Seventh (7th) Century BCE. As the story goes King Midas was blessed (or was it cursed?) that everything he touched turned into gold. The coins of that era have been found in the area of Frigin, present day northwestern part of Turkey.

Coins tell us the history of the era (as they invariably carried the portraits of rulers) in which they were minted together with the artwork and historical significance of the era as well. It was King Cysus of Lydia who minted coins to replace the barter system

bearing a lion's head on one side and a bull on the other side, reflecting Lydia and Ionian era respectively. However, it was King Darius, who stabilized the value of coins in 515 BC and these coins included imprints of Zeus/eagle/elephants. Many different coins minted in the Parthian period reflected quick succession of rulers. Sasanian era coins reflected state's image of the Zarathushti religion as they carried Atash kadeh/fire altar and later images of Ardeshir and Persepolis. In the first years of Islam, these Sasanian coins were still used, with the addition of the Bismillah in the margin.

Dr. Ervad Jehan Bagli (right with moderator Homi Gandhi) discussed the social and fiscal administration in the Achaemenian and Sasanian era with the help of over 20 slides. The Achaemenians practiced a kind of "Federal" system in administering the vast expanse of empire. The efficient management of the kingdom was carried out by three strategic economic sectors co-existing side-by-side: Royal, Religious and Private. The art of wine making and beer brewing was perfected in that era. Artisans, both men and women, of different nationality were treated as equal citizens and were paid for their work. The state's treasury was financed by

the annual taxes received in silver, estimated to exceed 350 Tons. In addition to taxes, the king also received taxes in kind.

The Sasanians exploited its natural resources and built a powerful economic state of highly productive agriculture and various classes of competitive artisans dictating the prosperity of the era. These artisans enjoyed exemption from military service during the peaceful times. Lands were granted to friends and relatives of the ruler and to army officers at the end of their military career. Water management and other important industries were under royal control. Silver coins became the basic unit of international trade, especially along the Silk route running across present day Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and further into China. The description of various socio-economic aspects of these two great ancient Iranian empires is documented from the tablets excavated in Persepolis, the "Persepolis Documents".



These are the three great duties of mankind:

To make an enemy a friend,

To make a wicked person righteous,

And to make an ignorant person wise.

(Shayest-ne-Shayest XX .6)



IMPACT – Worldwide Mentoring

Farrokh Mistree, Atlanta



Zarine Chenoy (left) and Phee Vania (right) unleashed a spark that they shared, namely, that of creating a mentorship program for the Zarathushti community worldwide. Here is what I took away from the inspiring session.

The spark within Phee Vania to undertake this initiative was unleashed on May 26, 2006 at the Open Forum hosted by

FEZANA in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mentorship refers to a developmental relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced partner referred to as a mentee or protégé. Mentoring within the Zarathushti community would benefit us all as those who are successful start pulling someone else in our community up the ladder of success. I learned that mentoring could take three forms, namely, **expert mentoring, career progression and psychosocial**; all relevant to our community. I much appreciated Zarine and Phee elucidating the role of a mentor and mentee and the need for understanding between both for success of the partnership; this is sound advice. I learned of the phases in the mentoring process:

Getting started – (current Bio);

Working together effectively – (Process/Agree);

Planning for success – (Define Milestones);

Executing the plan – (Calibrate/Same Page);

Concluding and assessing (Next Steps).

Finally, I was pleased by their invitation to volunteer

to be mentors by providing information on

www.zoro-impact.com.

Ms. Chenoy and Parizad Satarawalla, will create a process for a viable database. with two forms, one for mentors and one for mentees. Initially the matches will be manually managed. Once this process is streamlined it will be automated and turned over to FEZANA for ongoing maintenance.

Future mentors and mentees are encouraged to

write a note to zchenoy@hotmail.com for guidance

I found this session to be inspiring, informative and valuable. It is my sincere hope that the spark that was unleashed, by Phee and Zarine, on July 1, 2007 will indeed spread and years from now people will look back and recognize this initiative



HOUSE OF TATAS

Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy - Pittsburgh 2007 awarded to the TATA

Family in recognition of its longstanding commitment to philanthropic causes. The philosophy of "constructive philanthropy" embedded in for-profit Tata Group's values, has played a significant role in changing the traditional concept of charity throughout India.

The award will be accepted by **Ratan Tata**, chairman of India's influential industrial conglomerate, Tata Group, and one of India's foremost philanthropic leaders. Ratan Tata is strong proponent of corporate social responsibility and the Tata family funding has established pioneering institutions in social sciences, cancer research and treatment and tropical disease research.

Tata serves on the board of numerous influential medical and arts organizations including the program board of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's India AIDS Initiative. www.carnegiemedalpittsburgh.org



Reporting on 'Our Youth - Unleashing the Spark Within'



The title of the session said it all – UNLEASHING THE SPARK WITHIN. Moderated by **Ms. Mantreh Atashband**, (above) the session included talks by Ms. Armaity Homavazir, Mr. Nikan Khatibi, Ms. Diana Katgara, Ms. Farah Minwalla, and Ms. Diana Vania. All five speakers captivated the audience with their message of good will and hope.

Nikan Khatibi in his talk '**Resurrecting your Life**' emphasized the importance of enveloping strong leadership qualities and how making mistakes is a normal process of character development. Nikan concluded his talk by challenging members of the audience to return to their communities with the motivation to stand up and release their inner leadership skills to better serve the needs of a eagerly growing youth generation.

Ms. Diana Katgara followed with an emotional talk about her work in Bhopal, India where almost

twenty one thousand individuals died from a nearby Dow Chemical Plant mishap. Her work and dedication to helping the people of Bhopal for years, has not gone unnoticed by the world. Even today, Diana continues to fight the war of injustice in Bhopal and persuaded members in the audience to stand up to injustices in the world and take action.

Ms. Farah Minwalla, of Las Vegas, inspired the crowd with a humbling personal story of triumph and tranquility, Farah shared her personal story growing up in a community where the next closest Zarathushti family lived almost a plane ride away. Her story would have inspired anyone living in a small Zarathushti community to not lose hope and continue on the path of righteousness. Her work with the Zarathushti community around the country has been uplifting and the message she shared of hope and dedication resonated in the hearts of the audience.

Ms. Diana Vania, a young student living in Toronto, shared with the audience her service to the community through organizations such as Operation Eyesight and Stand Up Against Poverty. At a young age, Diana has done a lot to influence not only the community around her, but has used her time and efforts to inspire others across the country. A high school student by day, Diana brought a new meaning to the word community service as she continues to touch the lives of many through her righteous deeds.

Ms. Diana Vania,



Ms. Armaity Homavazir presented a talk that will resonate a lifetime for anyone who had the chance to hear her speak. A school teacher by profession, she has made more than her share of ripples for the community of Toronto through her effortless work with the youth committee. Armaity shared with the audience her inspirations in life and how they have transformed her as a Zarathushti. I was personally impressed by her work with Camp Pardis, a project which she spearheaded years ago as a means for youth to build camaraderie and an opportunity for them to bring up concerns in a comfortable setting.

All in all, the session was one of inspiration. So many of our youth Zarathushtis are making a difference not only in our community, but outside and doing so with the principles they have learned from the good religion of Zarathushtra. I congratulate the speakers of this session for their work, and hope their stories can be an inspiration for others.

By Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA



Zoroastrian Philosophy and Culture

Moderators: Dr. Rustom Kevala and Mrs. Parvin Contractor

This session examined **The Impact of Zarathushtra's Teachings on Iranian Culture and Society**, as well as on the world at large. It also examined how we as Zoroastrians can carry forward these teachings and message of our great prophet.

The session was conducted partly in English (Dr. Farhang Mehr) and partly in Farsi (Mr. Homer Abramian).



Dr. Farhang Mehr

Dr. Mehr is one of the most highly respected Zarathushtis in North America today. He is the Emeritus Professor of international relations at Boston University. He has served as the deputy prime minister of Iran, as Iran's principal representative to OPEC, as the president of Pahalavi University, and in many high level positions in industry. His book in Farsi, published in January 1990 is titled *Zoroastrian Philosophy: An old Wisdom in a New Perspective* and in English is called *The Zoroastrian Tradition, An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathushtra*, published by Element Press in 1991. His biography, entitled: *Triumph Over Discrimination: The Life Story of Farhang Mehr*, was published in 2000.

Dr. Mehr explained that since Iran has adopted the policy of dividing its history into two parts: one before, and the one after, the establishment of Islam in Iran, we have to deal with the impact of Zarathushtra's teachings on the Iranian culture and customs in two parts.

In pre-Islamic Iran (before seventh century CE), Iranian and Zarathusti cultures and customs coincided. Classical Greek historians refer interchangeably to Magi and Iranian customs. The Greeks observed that 'Lying' is the worst sin or crime in Iranian culture, obviously a direct impact of Asha. Herodotus wrote that Iranians do not wash filthy objects in the river because they worship the river. The facts in his statement are correct but the conclusion is erroneous. Zarathustis do not pollute water, earth, fire and air because the Gathas instruct us not to pollute nature and God's pure creations.

Freedom of Choice in acceptance of religion and respect for the others as promulgated in the Gathas was reflected in the treatment of the Jews and others in captivity in Babylon. In the book of Mino-I-Khrad, liberty is the first good cause of good works of men among thirty three good causes mentioned therein. According to the Old Testament and Greek classical writings, 'Law' was

supreme in ancient Iran. Strict rules governed the administration of justice. The Judges held their office for life, which, according to Herodotus, guaranteed their independence from the executive of the country.

Regarding customs, all national and religious festivities like Norooz, Mehrgan, Tirgan, Sadeh and Gahanbars were celebrated throughout Iran. During national festivities, the kings received the representatives of foreign countries, and various officials of religious groups - a custom that continued to be followed during the Islamic era.

Time did not permit Dr. Mehr to cover the impact of Zarathushti religion on Iranian culture and customs after the arrival of Islam. However, he mentioned the fallacies of certain myths concerning Arab victory over Sasanian Iran and the embracement of Islam by Zarathushtis.

Myth 1 - Islam is a universal religion. According to Koran, Islam was meant to be for the Arabs: See Sureh AShowra K42,7; Sureh Yusef K12,2&3; Sureh AIDokhan K44,58; Sureh Maryam K19,97; Sureh AIOmran K3,164. Hence I conclude that the story of the letter of Khalif Omar to Khosrow Parviz is a myth. The British historian Arnold Toynbee in: *A Study on History*, Oxford 1972, writes "Transformation of Christianity and Islam to universal religions was the work of successors to Christ and Muhammad. Christ always considered himself a Jew."

Myth 2 - Egalitarianism in Islam, so is the claim of democracy. Even in the dawn of Islam the tribe of Qureish prevailed over other Muslim tribes.

Myth 3 - Arab conquest was for the spread of Islam. The object was booty and plunder and taking of treasures and slaves. (See Clement Huart in *Histoire des Arabs*, vol. 1, p222).

Myth 4 - Arab victory was due to their superiority in warfare. That is a fallacy; it was mainly due to the disarray in the Iranian government and disruption of Sasanian royal establishment. Nine members of the Royal family came to the throne in four years, within two decades before the Arab invasion. Humiliating and suppressive class discriminations in Iranian society also contributed to the fall.

Myth 5 - Zoroastrian Iranians voluntarily embraced Islam. This is absolutely false. Zarathushtis nominally embraced Islam to avoid Jazyeh and other discriminatory restrictions, (see stories in Volume IV of *Cambridge History of Iran*).

Islam is a religion that regulates every aspect of all Muslims' lives and customs. It is interesting to observe so many remnants of Zarathushti culture in Islamic Iran even today.



Congress

Zoroastrian Philosophy and Culture

Moderators: Dr. Rustom Kevala and Mrs. Parvin Contractor

Mr. Homer Abramian

Mr. Abramian was born into an Assyrian (Christian) family in Hamadan. In midlife, he was introduced to the Avesta, and found within it that which quenched his thirst and answered his infinite questions. He gradually discovered that the Avesta is a treasure that has protected history's most significant jewel, the "Gathas of Zarathushtra" which, if utilized to its fullest, can free humanity from the miseries that envelop it. Mr. Abramian established the Persian Cultural Foundation in 1990 after settling in Sydney, Australia, with one essential goal in mind, to protect, uphold and introduce Zarathustra's message to his countrymen and, in particular, its youth.

Mr. Abramian spoke in beautiful, lyrical, Persian about the deep influence Zarathushtra's teachings had on Iranian culture and society. Based on Zarathushtra's teachings, Cyrus the Great proclaimed the first charter of human rights in the world. Cyrus the Great is the only non-Jew who was given the title of savior in the Bible.

Zarathushtra's message is universal and not confined to a particular race or group of people. It is our duty as Zarathushtis to propagate his message to the world.

In ending, he pointed out that the beautiful statue of Cyrus the Great (photo right) that he brought with him from Australia to the congress was a replica of the 101 much bigger statues made of granite stone that are being built and sent to heads of states and to people who help raise funds or donate towards them. These statues will be erected in different cities in the world with special ceremonies in honor of proclamation of human rights. Cyrus the Great.



Year 2057 A look to the future

Leaders of the World Zarathushti Community Speak



The 14th North American Congress provided an unique opportunity to bring the leaders of the Zarathushti organizations from around the world. Present were Mr Byram Avari, chairman of The Avari Group in Pakistan; Mr Minoo Shroff, Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayat, Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman, World Zoroastrian Organization, Mr Bomy Boyce, President of the World Chamber of Commerce, Mr Jimmy Mistry, Founder Trustee of the Parsi Resource group and Dr Rustom Kevala, President of FEZANA.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I sat in the relaxed atmosphere of the Sheraton Hotel and the Toronto Dar-e-Mehr and over a cup of coffee presented each of these gentlemen the same question. The

personal responses were very interesting reflecting their backgrounds and the geographical areas they came from. (Ed. Dolly Dastoor) Photo above-left to right Minoo Shroff, Rustom Kevala, Samy Bhiwandiwalla, Bomy Boyce.

QUESTION ASKED

Imagine that your great grand child is addressing the World/North American Zarathushti Congress in 2057 (50 years later) What would you like this person to say about

STATE OF THE WORLD ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY

Dr Rustom Kevala , President, FEZANA

Zarathushti community is well-integrated in North America. Although still a minority religion, its members are well-recognized and respected. To be a trusted and accomplished individual is equated to be a Zarathushti.

Zarathushtis are world citizens and have lost their distinct dialect or nationality.



Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman, World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO)

I am very despondent in many ways about the future. Even in the UK the numbers are falling according to the national census there are 3,700 Zarathushtis in the UK. On the other hand I am optimistic about North America, you are moving in the right direction. In the next 50 years, there has to be change, it may happen in India with the Association for the Revival of Zarathushtis, with AIM, the Association of Intermarried; with WZO, India, change in the clause for membership; in North America, with a more progressive outlook, in Europe with the New Zarathushtis and the recently arrived Zarathushtis from Iran.

Mr Jimmy Mistry Parsi Resource Group (PRG)

I have two answers for that

First a negative comment; what community? The religion will be gone by 2040 maximum, we have 750 mobeds over the age of 65, when India is rocking and rolling in money, we pay

Rs 100-Rs 110 a day, even taxi drivers and doorkeepers earn more. If most of our mobed are "daily wage earners" do you expect our religion to survive?

And now the positive comment the community would have grown in numbers but we have to start making adjustments now, accepting children of interfaith marriages, there is no other way.



Mr Minoo Shroff , Chairman BPP

(Mr Shroff phoned his 12 year old grandson in Mumbai, to get his comments)

It will be a small but robust community, less reliant on community funds and charity which has "spoiled" the community, more inter-marriages, more liberal in their views. In India the young Zarathushtis think of themselves as young Indians, take pride in the progress of India.



Mr Bomy Boyce, President, World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

I remember my grand parents talking about our numbers dwindling and this indeed would have been dramatic, had we not been able to amalgamate with other societies who like the Parsis of India kept the traditions of the religion alive, albeit in other parts of the world.

Many of them are here today and we welcome their presence once again. The adversity these regions passed through, (and we have to thank, those who remember, an American President called (GWB) for making this possible, and to whom we are deeply grateful), catapulted their presence and whereabouts to the rest of our great community. Over the years we have amalgamated and have become several millions strong. Many people from these societies are here today and we welcome them.



THE STATE OF THE RELIGION

Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman, World Zoroastrian Organization

The religion will be secure and that will not necessarily be due to the born Zarathushtis. The adults of this generation need to move now, we need to open our eyes and face up to the truth and not leave the change to the next generation.

Dr Rustom Kevala, President of FEZANA

Zarathushti religious literature has blossomed during the past 50 years into several philosophical treatises that are studied at most universities. Zarathushti religion is based on deep understanding of the place of mankind in Ahura Mazda's Creation. Zarathushti prayers are deeply spiritual and uplifting. They are well understood and adapted by people of many faiths into their daily prayers and aspirations. Religious rituals and prayers will not be very important in our lives in 2057. But to be religious is to be righteous and live a useful and meaningful life of service and enlightenment.

Mr Jimmy Mistry Parsi Resource Group (PRG)

Religion will survive with the survival of rites and rituals. If we do not have the mobeds, (priests) how can or will we survive. We need a closely knit and well connected community across the world, both for mobeds and the laity. I would like every mobed to be connected on the internet, to have a lap top so that they become aware of what is happening across the Diaspora.

Mr Bomy Boyce, President, World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

As we amalgamated, the practices and rituals of our brethren societies were sieved and we now have simplified rituals which are understood and welcomed by the Zarathushtrian laity. The state of the Religion has indeed strengthened over the last 50 years. The community recognized very quickly that the deep attachment, in belief or practice, have joined us all together to be a thriving bustling group of Z, now over 50 million strong. Most of us now follow very similar rituals, understand them better, and are sharing our goodwill with other religions. We celebrate each others practices and aspirations. We jointly continue to attract the attention of people of other beliefs around the world and we continue to influence them with the tenets of the Z religion

Mr Minoo Shroff, Chairman BPP

We will have to adapt to the changing times. We have to remain competitive in the world, only touting the "Z" brand is not enough

YOUR LEGACY IN MAKING THIS HAPPEN**Mr Jimmy Mistry Parsi Resource Group (PRG)**

Put words where action is needed, give facts and figures to the public so that they are aware of the circumstances surrounding our mobeds. The average age of our Panthakies is 70 + (and almost all agiaries are run by panthakies, and not managers), then we need younger mobeds to replace them.

Before I die I want to change the face of the "mobedi", (the institution of priesthood) make them self sufficient. I want to help them become more knowledgeable; create a group of enlightened mobeds. If Mobeds are looked after, then the religion/community will be looked after, if not I have serious concerns as to what will happen to our community,

Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman, World Zoroastrian Organization

If we do things right, then that will be our legacy. Change our constitution i.e anybody who profess the faith can join our organizations

Mr Bomy Boyce, President, World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

We owe thanks to our forefathers whose wisdom prevailed at the time of crisis in the world order and gave our community, who we all believed was going under, a new direction, the wisdom to open their minds and arms to our brethren, our very own people and to bring order from chaos, "chord", a word coined by the founder of the father of all associations called "FEZANA". Fortunately it still exists and I urge all who have not done so yet to go to the archives and read the editorials which are so apt and illuminating. The network created by WZCC brought about the flourishing of the community businesses, increased the community's asset base and prosperity, bringing back the glory of our ancient community. Today, we relish in the spool of prosperity and unleashed spirit of our members and we bow our heads to the wisdom, dedication and the sincere love of our forefathers.

Dr Rustom Kevala President, FEZANA

I want Zarathushti presence in all major religious dialogues and spiritual gatherings. I want Zarathushti festivals and holy days to be included in all calendars.

Mr Minoo Shroff, Chairman BPP

You need to gain respect and reputation as a person and not because you are a Zarathushti. My grandson respects me as a person and not as a Zarathushti. You should be perceived by others to be a man of reputation and respect rather than you saying I am a Parsi. My role model was A.D. Shroff, Chairman of Bank of India, and a fighter for free-enterprise. I got elected to the BPP in mid 80s and am now Chairman,

ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WISH THIS PERSON TO MAKE**Mr Minoo Shroff, Chairman, BPP**

Respect as a Zarathushti is accidental, be a good useful citizen

Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla, Chairman, World Zoroastrian Organization

Good luck to my grandson

Dr Rustom Kevala, President, FEZANA

Zarathushtis have found their place in the world.

Mr Jimmy Mistry Parsi Resource Group

Survival of our mobeds and the survival of our religion go hand in hand.

Mr Bomy Boyce, President, World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

May our ranks increase, So be it, Ahura Mazda.



Congress At Home Abroad

BEHRAM PASTAKIA

**"The pessimist complains about the wind;
The optimist expects it to change;
The realist adjusts the sails."**

- William Arthur Ward

IMPACT ! the 14th NAZC at its opening session, rang a bell (many times!) for FEZANA. It was time for us to take stock. To see how we can build the necessary infrastructure -- so that our community not merely survives but thrives in its new homeland! Where should our priorities lie? What can we do for ourselves and what should we expect from the traditional mother ships of Iran, India and Pakistan whence we migrated to these hospitable shores of Canada and the USA? The section "How the Greater Zarathushti World Views FEZANA" in the Summer 2007 issue of FEZANA Journal is a piece of the theme and provided valuable insights as we tried to clarify our thinking.

ENTERPREUNERSHIP



Minoo Shroff, (Minoo and Vilho Shroff, left) in his keynote address, encouraged entrepreneurship. The Zoroastrian Investment Corporation Pvt, Ltd has been formed to provide financial assistance to young entrepreneurs. In response to a call given by Bomy Boyce, at the WZCC deliberations on 29th June 2007 an

inventory of ideas for incubating businesses was tabulated. The concept of "Business cells" to emphasize mentoring - the older generation giving of themselves and sharing their experience with youth who have a fire in their belly to succeed, was mooted. It was acknowledged that the leadership for this initiative to move away from service jobs back to business came from North America. In the final analysis however, the measure of our success will be to count how many entrepreneurs we create through these networking efforts.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In this millennium, education and scholarship will be pivotal for individuals to succeed in a competitive global

marketplace. As Farhang Mehr says "We should never ask for concession or affirmative action on the grounds of being a minority. Zarathushtis must compete with the majority on the grounds of merit, irreplaceability, indispensability and recognition". Competition is good for us; it sharpens our abilities and we should welcome it. If we are to see this vision fulfilled, we should support Zarathushtis seeking an education in colleges in North America. It was announced at the congress that every Zarathushti youth in India wishing to study abroad could find funds through charitable trusts. However, there is a disconnect. We know of students paying for college on loans taken on credit cards! What a disgrace! FEZANA has established scholarships, and so have some individual local associations but these are not nearly enough either in number or in the amount given out to meet the need. As the first generation of Zarathushtis in America nears retirement age and plan wills, bequests and estates, they may consider adding to the established endowed scholarships [one was established at the AGM in Dallas, Texas to celebrate FEZANA's 20th anniversary!] and endow some new ones of their own.

PRIESTS

Dorab Mistry notes "I am disappointed at the complete lack of regard at FEZANA for the religious leaders of our faith." We should take note of this perception and address the issue. We as laity do take the



Closing Jashan I(photo above) led by Ervad Jehan Bagli and 17 mobeds at the Congress

volunteer services provided by our priests too much for granted. Most of them have full time jobs to maintain their families, and donate of their time for funerals, weddings, navjotes, jashans, religious education classes for our children and for the adults. It is time for the laity to step up to the plate and support our priests. Having said that, from what Jimmy Mistry of the Parsi Resource



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Group had to relate at the congress, the priests in India, specially the older ones are often destitute without adequate health care. This is a shame! It gives us pause, as we think of our own infrastructure needs as a Zarathushti community in the new world. How do we intend to support our priests?

CONNECTING CULTURES

Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary from Iran has some advice for FEZANA in bridging the cultural gap between Zarathushtis from Iran and from the subcontinent. There is a lot the Parsis have to learn from the Zarthushtis in Iran; which we have realized only after coming to North America. The tradition of the Haft-Seen table, the celebration of Mehragan and Tirgan are examples of festivals based on a solar calendar, which are faithfully kept by Zarathushtis from Iran, forgotten by the Parsis in the subcontinent and have seen a revival in North America. Let us pray together and celebrate these community events together.

INTERFAITH

Many laudatory comments were made in the F.J Summer 2007 [Hinnells, Dhalla, Soroushian] and at the congress about active participation in Inter-religious activities which have raised the profile of Zarathushtis in the changing religious landscape of North America. Leadership provided by Jehangir Sarosh in Europe has been emulated. We see greater participation in London by office bearers of ZTFE and WZO in inter-religious activities.

We should be clear as to why we participate in these activities. Being part of an interfaith dialogue is not to "create awareness" or to raise the profile of our religion, though these may come as unintended side-effects. It is not intended to provide a forum for proselytization. *Its main purpose is to serve as one of several pleasant means to enhance our own spirituality and in understanding our own religion.* When asked "What do you believe?" or "What do your scriptures say about creation?" or "Will you recite a verse from your scriptures at the next interfaith dialogue?" it makes the individual go back and study in more depth his/her own religion; and try to understand the message. The process helps us in establishing and reinforcing our own religious identity.

Zarathushtis are very well suited for interfaith dialogue. They serve as effective bridge builders, as they see their own faith traditions of truth, righteousness, charity, beneficence, respect for creation reflected in the traditions of the religions of both the occident and the orient. But we must also remember that dialogue is only the first step. It helps brings minds together. However, it

is action that counts at the end of the day! Let us look forward to an era where every member association and small group in FEZANA plans as part of its annual calendar of events, activities focused on helping the needy in collaboration with members of the other faith traditions, as they live the meaning of our "Yatha Ahu Vairyo".

MUSIC

Music is a great unifier. It transcends ethnic, national, cultural, linguistic, and religious boundaries. The performance of the World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Farobag Homi Cooper (photo below) brought the house down at the Gala



event! It was a clear vindication of the decision made by chair Rashna Ghadiali of the 12th NAZC in Chicago to support the Orchestra which had made its debut at the 7th World



The children of the Religious class,

Zoroastrian Congress in Houston in 2000. The WZSO is a legacy gift of the North American diaspora to the world. We should seriously consider how best to support the WZSO. The IMPACT on the individual who



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Farsi Choir

performs and on his extended family, is creation of a life long memory. More importantly, music serves to build community. How I wish the "Khudavind-e-Khavind" presentation by children of the religious class, the singing by the Farsi choir at the closing session and the orchestra was beamed live to Zarathushtis who could not attend. They were an inspiration to us all.

Surely there are talented Zarathushti musicians all over the globe. When will the wealthy Parsi Diaspora in India think of subsidizing travel for musicians to perform in the World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra? They have an opportunity coming up in Dubai in December 2009!

TITANS

The session entitled "TITANS" will go down as a milestone in the evolution and establishment of the Zarathushti Diaspora in North America, for the far-sighted use of emerging technologies by organizers at the ZSO. Despite technological and scheduling uncertainties involved, and the expenses incurred, it was well worth the effort. It showcased how our far flung co-religionists can get connected from Mumbai, New Delhi and South



Titans: Ratan Tata (left) Nadir Godrej (right) on video conference

Africa into Toronto for a live question answer session. As a legacy of this congress we can now foresee the use of such broadcasts at a local association level, to leverage the expertise extant in major metropolitan areas for religious education to reach those in the hinterlands. The costs for mounting such events will certainly come down. It is no longer a matter whether Zarathushtis will go down this road; it is just a matter of when. We can now dream of lectures broadcast from 'Zoroastrian Studies' in Mumbai to hand held devices equipped with video streaming within a decade, or broadcast of a lecture from the Zoroastrian Library in Houston, to associations gathered for a pot-luck in their home towns to listen in; share knowledge and build community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

FEZANA Journal (guest editors -- Shireen Cama and Vishtasp Soroushian), Spring 2007 featured many examples of Zarathushti Youth Without Borders who travel to remote countries of their own volition and often at their own expense to serve humanity.

We had stellar examples of such work showcased at the congress; a wonderful reminder that the Zarathushtis in North America are creating their own unique identity. Diana Vania, a high school student, was chair of the "Operation Eyesight" program at the Congress. Diana Katgara spent ten months with the victims of the Union Carbide chemical leak in Bhopal, India in an advocacy role for human rights. Anahita Dua was acknowledged for her medical volunteer work in Palestine and in Africa. Nikan Khatibi is creating opportunities for ZYNA - the Zarathushti Youth of North America with President Jimmy Carter later this year, in Los Angeles, California, to provide affordable housing for the poor.

When there is an earthquake, or a tsunami or a flood, these are viewed as opportunities rather than disasters. Active physical participation in helping enhances our existential spirituality. The trick is to learn how to carry the same feeling for caring for our fellow-man every day of our lives. The response to the earthquake in Kashmir with a coordinated clothes collection drive is an example which brought unity of purpose bi-nationally; the leadership for this concerted action on the world stage to work with Toxy Cowasjee in Pakistan came from FEZANA, in response to an e-mail in cyberspace "just a thought..." by Dina McIntyre.

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla presented a power point presentation of the wonderful charity work undertaken by the WZO in India and elsewhere, well documented in recent issues of HAMA ZOR. Questions from the audience seeking clarifications on how best to donate to



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the WZO coffers clearly indicated that this work was highly appreciated. The collaboration between WZO and FEZANA has been fruitful, and Sam indicated a willingness to build on these established relationships between the two organizations.

WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

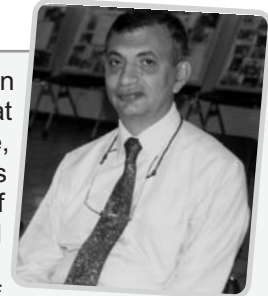
Firdosh Bhesania ((photo below) charmed the audience at the closing session; for he was brief, to the point and shared with us a beautifully produced documentary film inviting us to the 9thWZC in Dubai. The film is short and carries with it a historic perspective of the WZC's held to date since the first one in Tehran. Local member associations may consider screening it for their membership at their social events.

LESSONS LEARNED

We have learned to prefer dialogue over debate and consensus over compromise to come together and work together for our beloved community.

THE FUTURE?

In his remarks at the FEZANA AGM in May 2006 in Atlanta, Dinshaw Tamboly, impressed with the leadership, sensed that the Zoroastrian Diaspora is gradually shifting to the North American continent. Thinking at the 14th NAZC in Toronto, indicated that he may well be right. Time will tell.



Behram Pastakia born in Mumbai, India in the year that marked India's independence, Behram Pastakia spent his childhood in the steel city of Jamshedpur, Bihar, and obtained his medical degree from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), in New Delhi on a Tata scholarship. After spending some time working in remote villages of Yazd as a physician, he moved to the United States where he trained in Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Radiology, starting his career at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland where he was attracted by the research opportunities provided in the field of Magnetic Resonance Imaging. He now works as a radiologist for the US Government as part of the Veterans Affairs system of health care in the US capital.

Past president of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington DC Inc, he is currently the Zarathushti representative on the Board of the Interfaith Conference of Washington DC; serves on the editorial board of FEZANA Journal and as Co-Chair of the FEZANA's UN-NGO committee. The focus of these activities is to encourage Zarathushti youth to become world citizens and leaders of tomorrow in the knowledge-based, globalized marketplace of the current century.

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Perspectives on the Zarathushti Diaspora in North America

JESSE S PALSETIA

DISSEMINATION OF CONTACT

A diaspora is defined as the dispersion of a people from their original homeland. Zarathushtis hold Iran to be their ancestral homeland. There have been various Zarathushti diaporas throughout history including the Parsi communities in India, Britain, and the British Empire. The formation of the 'new world' diasporas of North America, Australia and New Zealand is a phenomenon of the migration of the developing world from the mid-1960s. The importance of the North American diaspora is undeniable. Every Zarathushti somewhere in the 'old world' knows a Zarathushti in North America. The North American communities were established as places of migration and permanent settlement. One Zarathushti association or center was established every year in the past twenty-five years across North America. The formation of North American Congresses, beginning in 1975, the creation of Association newsletters, the registration of FEZANA or the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America in 1987 and its Journal in 1988, and now internet communications, have all fostered contact on a continental level and produced a sense of community unknown in the old world diasporas.

YOUTH

The North American diaspora has devoted more attention to the concern and promotion of Youth as any community in the history of the Zarathushti diaspora. This is evident in the establishment of the first Youth Camp in 1987 in Houston, the

First World Zoroastrian Youth Congress in 1993 in Los Angeles, and a youth wing as part of FEZANA since 1994. The interest in Youth goes well beyond specific issues, and involves a realization that Youth are the future and that a well-educated and confident Youth will take up the challenges facing the community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education also has a high profile in North America. The lack of regular contact with Zarathushti religious traditions necessitated the religious education of children. In North America, every Association has made some provision for religious education. The implementation of religious education is difficult, and no comprehensive system of religious education and curriculum exists that unites all centers. Yet the volunteer efforts of dedicated Zarathushtis in educating of Zarathushti children attest to the singular importance of Zarathushti religious education in North America.

ZARATHUSHTI IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY BOUNDRIES

The question of identity and community boundaries has historically concerned Zarathushti diasporas. In the older diasporas, Zarathushtis self-identified as Parsis or Iranis. The North American diaspora has taken up the question of identity and community boundaries both within and without the community. Inclusiveness within and receptivity to the outside has marked the general North American Zarathushti response. In the Associations, Zoroastrian or

Zarathushti has become the preferred appellation of members, acknowledging the ties between South Asian Zarathushtis and Iranians. Community centers accommodate both South Asian and Iranian Zarathushtis, and Association newspapers are printed in English and Farsi. Individual Zarathushti community centers also welcome non-Zarathushti spouses and children at community functions and on religious occasions.

North American Zarathushtis also have formed strong associations with their adopted countries, identifying themselves not just as Zarathushti, Irani or Parsi, but also as American and Canadian. North American Zarathushtis also regard themselves as ambassadors of their religion and culture and have been proactive in promoting the image of Zarathushtrian religion to the wider community.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Perhaps the fundamental issue facing the different communities in North America is the question of adaptation: the fine balance between respect for tradition and the need for innovation. In North America, all segments of the community have been involved in addressing the issue of adaptation, confirming that all Zarathushtis progressive and orthodox, have a voice in the disposition of their religion. Since the early 1980s meetings of the mobeds (athornans) have circulated ideas on such issues as navjotes (sudreh pushi) and funerals, communal



prayers, and the adoption of a uniform calendar.

Many of the issues surrounding adaptation are not new and have historical precedent. The spread of the Zarathushtrian diaspora has witnessed Zarathushtis socially mixing with non-Zarathushtis (in business, politics, and social gatherings), culturally and linguistically adapting, and solemnizing new religious rites (such as consecrating burial grounds or aramgahs). Furthermore, rituals also evolve. The ceremony of purification of Parsi priests in India today is less elaborate than in the past. Vigorous debate exists among Zarathushtis on their religion, traditions, and community, and at times it is passionate and acrimonious. At the same time, the fervor of debate reflects an essentially positive phenomenon: that Zarathushtis refuse to see themselves as a dying community.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG THE DIASPORAS

The North American and World Zarathushti diasporas have a responsibility to each other, in terms of understanding each others predicaments and the need for cooperation to resolve common concerns. The diasporas' responsibility to the Zarathushti

poor and indigent is another urgent issue, and which involves material heritage: the care for the poor, and the management, maintenance and upkeep of community funds, trusts and properties. Resolution of such issues necessitates collective efforts by Zarathushtis globally. Zarathushtis historically have met such challenges, as in the 19th century when the Parsis of India utilized their material resources and international influence in assistance of the Zarathushtis of Iran.

THE FUTURE: A SENSE OF OPPORTUNITY

A sense of opportunity exists among North American Zarathushtis that the future of the religion may rest with them. The North American diaspora has the necessity to address issues of concern, and also the opportunity to provide a model for the World Zarathushti Community. Whereas an official consensus does not exist and debate remains on change—the pressures of modernity, the necessity to adapt, and the demands of inclusiveness have witnessed such issues as intermarriage, children's initiation into the community, and funerary rites becoming largely non-issues in the Western diaspora communities. As Indian Parsis debate the future of such things as dokmenashini, forced on them by the extinction of

the vultures of South Asia, or how to safeguard aspects of community life in the midst of demographic decline, the North American communities are providing new models: in terms of adapting tradition to suit new circumstances, and the solemnization of new traditions by priests. Significantly, the Parsis may have to turn to the models of social and religious adaptation Western Zarathushti centers have been adopting.

Dr. Jesse S. Palsetia is Associate Professor of History at the University of Guelph, Canada. He has written

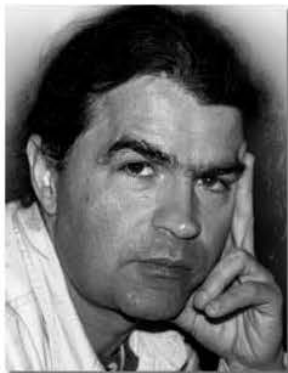


extensively on the Parsis, the history of Bombay, and on topics in Indian history and civilization. Dr. Palsetia is the author of the Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City (Brill Publishers, Leiden, 2001). He is currently working on a manuscript of the Parsi merchant-prince and philanthropist Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Knight and 1st Baronet.

**Solemnly dedicate myself to the excellent
religion of
Mazda-worship which ends strife,
Promotes non-violence,
Self-sacrifice and holiness. (Yasna 12.9)**

ZARATHUSTRA

Humata - Hukhta - Huvarshta



Sina Vojdani



Large size book (11.2"x12.6") with 270 pages and 360 glossy impressive photos and texts in English & German, inclusive DVD & SACD Hybrid. Also available as only SACD Hybrid or DVD.



Sina Vojdani hands you the whole wealth of his musical know-how in this unusual production. Iranian instruments, such as nay, oud, daf and camanscha, voices of Persian priests, original sounds from Iran, Indian sitar and the bansuri flute played by Ronu Majumdar – unite with western harmonies to announce the message of the religions founder – Zarathustra.

GOOD THOUGHTS - GOOD WORDS - GOOD DEEDS.

The composer is so impressed by the peaceful message, that he travels for weeks through his native Iran in the footsteps of Zarathustra, where he meets wonderful artists and Zoroaster holy men, collecting music, atmosphere and feeling. The result is a new work, whose mood is one, which floats between ease and confidence to emotional longing and fascinating drama.

This book contains two more surprises: The first is a DVD. The

second is Vojdani's new CD ZARATHUSTRA boasting a **world premiere**. He is the first composer to include the voices of Zoroastrian priests in his works – and their prayer chants, coupled with Persian sounds and modern Western grooves, proclaim the peaceful message of Zoroastrianism. Last but not least, the DVD provides a kaleidoscope of visual impressions from the land of Zoroaster – set to the rhythm of Vojdani's compositions.

Sina Vojdani, son of a French mother and Iranian father, considers it his duty as an artist to deliver spiritual messages and to make a creative contribution to the dialogue between the different cultures. He was born in Esfahan in 1954 but growing up in Tehran, San Francisco and Paris he was soon confronted with the necessity for interethnic tolerance.

Following first performances of pop songs and French chansons he soon turned his attention to aspects of Middle Eastern music - inspired by his travelling experiences and fascinated by the meditative power of the music. Vojdani's goal is to communicate the essence of this analysis through his music, as a means of crossing and bringing together borders, uniting traditional sounds with electronic grooves in the creative process.



"To love and live, we must live in love," is the core principle on which KHORSHED JUNGALWALA lived her life. As winner of the 2007 FEZANA's Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award; this granddaughter of Khan Saheb Pestonji & Cooverbai Wadia, and daughter of Dhunjishah and Tehmina, comes from a family who had a high sense of integrity. As a teacher, mother, entrepreneur, and leader she positively impacted numerous lives exemplifying many important Zarathushti ideals. As an embodiment of **GOOD THOUGHTS, GOOD WORDS** and **GOOD DEEDS**, Khorshed was honored numerous times for her extraordinary service to our North American and Global Zarathushti community, much of it behind the scenes. It is because her motherly work was grounded on the foundation of equality, integrity and the supreme laws of Asha.

As a pillar of the Boston Zarathushti community, Khorshed contributed to the larger FEZANA and world community in numerous ways. With a generous heart and a gracious spirit, Khorshed opened her home to many more people than we can imagine. She along with her husband Firoze, were the founding members of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area – ZAGBA (1983). ZAGBA became a vibrant presence in North America under Khorshed's mentorship and leadership as the President for two terms (1992-1996).

An avid supporter of classical music and of arts, Khorshed has held various positions on the boards on Arts Councils and Cultural Organizations and retired as President of the MetroWest International Concerts Association (MWICA) after 12 years. She was a Director on the Board of the Third World Scholars Consortium, in Boston, 1995-1997, a member of the Governor's Advisory Council (1998-2000) and served as Justice of Peace in the State of Massachusetts since 1998. She received awards of recognition from organizations for her voluntary services. She has contributed several articles in

Khorshed Jungalwal

Zarathushti and non-Zarathushti Journals. In 1984 she went to the Soviet Union with a team of students at the invitation of President Gorbachev and visited the Central Asian Republics. Upon her return she was one of the two writers of a book about the history of Zoroastrians in the region of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, etc. She believed in pursuing her passion, vision and mission with compassion. These humanistic attributes contributed toward building a legacy on the foundation of Zarathushtra's vision of freedom, liberty and justice for all humankind by creating a communal environment of goodwill, trust and conviviality. Her work and character nurtured a sense of pride for our religion, roots and history. Khorshed's passion for learning not only evolved around things that mattered to business, technology, insurance or finance; but also encompassed places, people, music, medicine, literature, philosophy, religion, the arts and the sciences. It is because: She always placed the "extra" before the "ordinary" to make it extra-ordinary.

Her vision, enthusiasm, and enduring values of accomplishment coupled with steadfast commitment and tenacious zeal have not only contributed to our Zarathushti community and heritage but also to our society and humanity. As an advocate against discrimination, Khorshed was actively involved in projects related to religious and social discrimination in North America, one being sponsored by the Pluralism Project of Harvard University. Her work involved bringing together through mediation; educating the public about customs and traditions of others and providing help to those who were unable to help themselves. As President of MetroWest International Concerts Association she raised funds and successfully obtained grants for underprivileged, talented children in field of music and dance. She was a role model as well as a soul model to them.

As a popular speaker at National & International Conferences, Former Chair of FEZANA Publication Committee, Chair of FEZANA ad hoc committee on World Body and President of ZAGBA, this intrepid lady charmed us all with her grace and dignity by being a great role model and a strong advocate of religious tolerances and recognition-cum-acceptance of doctrinal differences.

The motto: "Don't demand respect, command respect," reflected the life she lived in the service of humanity. Rather her love and spirit extended far beyond serving people – to all creations that embodies the essence of humanity. She has touched and impacted not just minds but also the soul of all people by epitomizing a way of life and a culture of respect that cares for others.



Congress

The Inaugural Jungalwala Lecture

The Vision of Zarathushtra

KHORSHED JUNGALWALA – FEZANA RELIGIOUS LECTURE SERIES was established in 2006 in honor of and in recognition of the contributions Khorshed Jungalwala, made as the long serving Chair of the FEZANA Standing Committee of Information Receiving and Dissemination and the World Body Working Group. This fund will sponsor a well recognized scholar, from any part of the world, to present their scholarly paper or work at any FEZANA member association hosted seminar or conference. These series will be organized by the Religious Education, Conference and Scholarship Committee of FEZANA

Prof. Kaikhosrov Irani, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York, discussed the Philosophy of Zarathushtra in terms of the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement of 18th century Europe which questioned traditional beliefs and prejudices especially in religion and emphasized the primacy of reason and strict scientific methods. In science and technology inquiry and conclusion based on reason and experiment is relatively easy. But for religious beliefs there is no easy method of validation and a religious belief has to be justifiable to the conscience of the believer. To accept a belief as if it were true, may give some comfort and direction but it is not a true belief because it lacks conviction.

There were actually three Enlightenment movements. Before the 18th century movement, there was Socrates who challenged the religious beliefs of Greeks by applying logic to religious and ethical thinking and eventually paid for his efforts with his life. Even before Socrates, Zarathushtra introduced a concept of religion based on reason, introducing for the first time a system of belief which did not depend on the beliefs of a tribe but on personal choice and personal responsibility.

According to Zarathushtra, Ahura Mazda created a perfect order, Asha, according to which creation was expected to progress. In the physical (Getig) creation, however there are opposing vectors in this contaminated world. Mankind is blessed with the faculty of the Good Mind (Vohu Mano) which can instinctively grasp Asha. In any situation mankind has the faculty to see how things ought to be and this is where one's conscience derives from. However the Good Mind can be clouded by two forces, greed and fear. One needs to clear the mind from these two regressive forces. In practical life one is not always successful in following what one knows is right. For example, it is not that we cannot recognize injustice, but many times we decide not to do anything about it, and our own conscience lets us know that one has made the wrong choice. Thus, there is a powerful internal validation through conscience.

Prof. Kaikhosrov D. Irani



Mere obedience to a set of religious customs is not enlightenment and piety does not come from obedience without the use of reason. Traditions are important but they must uphold reasoned beliefs. It is amazing that 3000 years ago a great sage offered a set of beliefs and the personal freedom to choose those beliefs only if they made sense.

This short synopsis does not do justice to a lecture of Prof Irani which was full of personal anecdotes and references to the views of many philosophers. .

Reported by Lovji Cama, Tenafly, NY.





Congress

The 2007 North American Zarathushti Community Awards

Framroze Patel, Chair of the 2007 Awards Committee and Shehernaz Joshi Verahrami, co-chair, (photo below) animated the FEZANA sponsored glittering awards ceremony following lunch to an overflowing crowd of over 500 Zarathushtis.

The Award for Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature was renamed in memory of late Dinshaw Joshi, the first chair of the Awards Committee, as the Dinshaw Joshi



Memorial Award for Excellence in Performing Arts, Painting or Literature.

WE HONOUR AND SALUTE OUR OWN



The Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award :

To recognize a Zarathushti who has made outstanding and well recognized contributions to further the cause of Zarathushtis in North America and internationally

through outstanding leadership and service in the fields of Zarathushti history, theology, culture, religious education, community organization and interfaith activities.

This award was presented to **Late Khorshed F.Jungalwala of Boston**, a guiding force that impacted the lives of all who came in contact with her and she left an indelible mark on the Zarathushti community worldwide (see page 30 for details of her life-long contribution). The Jungalwala family (above) accepted the



award on behalf of **JUNE 30, 2007**
Late Khorshed F Jungalwala.

Excellence in Business or Profession Award: *To recognize a Zarathushti who has reached the pinnacle of prominence in his /her profession and/or business and whose achievements have been recognized both in North America and worldwide*

This award was presented to Dr Beheruz N. Sethna, (photo right) of Atlanta President of



The University of West Georgia and Professor of Business Administration. He heads a university of 10,000 students and 500 faculty members. He has held, on an interim basis the position of Executive Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic officer for the entire university system of Georgia. Author of 60 publications in national and international journals Dr Sethna is the first known person of Indian origin to become president of a university within the United States and is the highest ranked academic of Indian origin in North America,

Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Service Award:

To recognize a Zarathushti who has made significant contributions in advancing social and humanitarian causes in general and for the Zarathushti community in particular and whose humanitarian service achievements have been acknowledged in his/her community, in North America and worldwide



This award was presented to **Dr Russi D. Balsara** of Toronto, chief of the Dental Clinic of the North Toronto District, Office of Veterans Affairs, and Canada. He has provided humanitarian services in India, Canada and to the Zarathushti community in North America. He was directly involved in getting the Iranian Zarathushti refugees admitted into Canada, ensured that they received suitable housing, care and helped them settle in their new lives in



Congress

The 2007 North American Zarathushti Community Awards

Canada. He has provided help and support to Zarathushtis in time of medical crisis and to families in times of death. He has received the Mel Osborne Fellowship award for his services and dedication to the Kiwanis Organization locally and internationally, and was awarded the 35 year Legion of Honor standing by *Kiwanis International* for his involvement in community and international children's issues.

**Dinshaw Joshi
Memorial Award for
Excellence in
Performing Arts,
Painting or Literature:**

To recognize a Zarathushti who has excelled in performing arts and whose achievements have been recognized by peers within the country of residence and internationally.



This award was presented to **Dinyar J. Vania of New York**, (photo above) a tenor soloist with the Syracuse Opera, Naples Philharmonic and the Sacramento Opera. He has won first place in the Giulio-Gari International Vocal Competition and was semi-finalist in the Placido Domingo's Operalia in Spain. He celebrated his debut in Carnegie Hall as a tenor soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and as Rodolfo in La Boheme with the New York City Opera. He started his singing career in 1996 when he auditioned for a school play and has not looked back since. He received a full scholarship from Ithaca College and completed his voice training at the Mannes College of Music. Despite his operatic career, Dinyar has found time to participate in many community events and has sung at previous North American Zoroastrian Congresses. He is considered one of opera's most exciting new talents. He delighted the audience with a rendition of O Sole' Mia.

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award: *To recognize a young Zarathushti, 30 years or younger, who after achieving high grades in scholastic studies and participates in extra-curricular activities, has subsequently achieved excellence in his/her chosen profession and deemed to be a rising star by his peers and has made substantial contributions to the Zarathushti community.*



This award was presented to **Dinsha Farrokh Mistree, of Atlanta** who holds a Bachelors and Masters degree in Political Science from MIT and plans to focus on international development and political economy for his Ph.D program. He is researching issues on electronic governance and served as a research assistant for the labor standards in a globalization project sponsored by Nike, Inc. At 23 years he has co-edited a book "Mapping Sustainability: Knowledge e-Networking and the Value Chain" (Springer Press). He is now working on his second book on globalization, technology and governance due to be published in 2008 by the Congressional Quarterly Press. Dinsha has participated in both the World Zoroastrian and the Zoroastrian Youth Congresses, has published articles in the FEZANA Journal, is an eagle scout, two-time varsity soccer State Finalist and president of the local Amnesty International chapter. He has volunteered with several organizations in India focusing on inner-city and rural poverty, and rural HIV/AIDS education.

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Student Award.

To recognize a young Zarathushti student who is studying at the University level, has achieved academic excellence, excelled in extra-curricular activities and who has made substantial contributions to Zarathushti community.

This award was presented to **Ms Anahita Dua, of Chicago**, a 4th year medical student at the University of Aberdeen Medical School, wanting to special in renal transplantation surgery. She has worked in refugee camps on specialized medical missions. Her passion for international medical work has led her to volunteer (in her vacation time) in India as a traveling brothel doctor (STDs and women's health), in Palestine with a pediatric cardiac team as a surgical assistant, in Kenya as a general practitioner (child health and women's health mainly), in the DR Congo with rape victims assisting with fistula repair and reconstructive surgery, and will be in Afghanistan for 4 weeks in December working in the CURE hospital providing maternal health care



Besides excelling in academic work, Anahita plays the piano, speaks several languages, trained in Hindustani semi-classical vocal music, and holds the distinction of being the only girl on a boys' high school football team and scored a touchdown in the homecoming



Congress

The 2007 North American Zarathushti Community Awards



game in her senior year. She is the only girl in the United States to have achieved that distinction that year. **The award was accepted by her mother, Dr. Arnavaz Dua** (photo left)

Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to a North American Zarathushti who has made outstanding and well recognized

contribution in business, education, engineering, fine arts, literature, medicine, public service, religion, science or world affairs. The individual must have held a high level position at the decision making or executive level and achieved sustained national and international recognition beyond the Zarathushti community.

The FEZANA officers in consultation with the FEZANA Awards committee made the selection for the 2007 Life time achievement award



This award was presented to **Ambassador Jamsheed K.A. Marker** (photo left) who has had a long and distinguished diplomatic career beginning as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Ghana, then Romania, the former USSR, Canada, the

German Democratic Republic, Japan, Federal German

Republic, and France. In 1986 he was named ambassador to the United States and has been credited to greatly strengthening relations between Pakistan and the US. He was later appointed a Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York, with two years on the Security Council and one year as chairman of the Group of 77. All this provided him with valuable experience in multicultural negotiations.

On his retirement, he was appointed by Kofi Annan, as Personal Representative of the Secretary General of the UN, for East Timor. The successful resolution of the East Timor Conflict and the independence of that nation in February 2000 won him praise and world renown.

Throughout his busy and distinguished career, Ambassador Marker has maintained close relationships with the Zarathushti community. He was the key note speaker at the World Zoroastrian Congress in Houston, December 2000.

He is the grand nephew of Pestonji Marker, well-known to Zarathushtis of Yazd for starting the orphanage for boys and the Girls High school. (For Further details see page 47)

(Niloufer Mama accepted the award on behalf of Ambassador Marker from FEZANA President Rustom Kevala, photo above)



From left to right: Dinyar Vania, Dr. Russi D Balsara, Farzeen Patel, Firoz Jungalwala, Dr. Arnavaz Dua, Dinsha Mistree and Dr. Behruz Sethna. Not in photo Ambassador Jamsheed Marker and Anahita Dua.



Congress

ZARATHUSHTI HALL OF FAME

Recipients of North American Zarathushti Community Awards 1988-2007

Lifetime Achievement Award

- 2007 Ambassador Jamsheed Marker
- 2002 Dr Farhang Mehr
- 1996 Prof Kaikhosrov D. Irani
- 1990 Maestro Zubin Mehta

Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award

- 2007 Late Mrs Khorshed F. Jungalwala
- 2004 Mr Framroze Patel
- 2002 Mr Kayomارش P. Mehta
- 1998 Mrs Farangis K. Shahrokh
- 1996 Mr Homi Minocher-Homji
- 1994 Dr Dolly Dastoor
- 1992 Mr Homi Davier
- 1990 Mr Rohinton and Mrs Roshan Rivetna
- 1988 Mr Minoo Dastoor

Excellence in Business and Profession Award

- 2007 Dr Beheruz N. Sethna
- 2004 Dr Dhun Noria
- 2002 Mr Firdaus Bhathena
- 1998 Dr Yasmin Thanavala
- 1996 Mr Adi Dastur
- Dr Mehroo Jussawalla
- 1994 DrJehan Bagli
- 1992 Mr Mehli Mehta and
- Prof. Jamshed Mavalwala
- 1990 Mr Meherwan Boyce

Dinshaw Joshi Memorial Award in Performing Arts, Literature or Painting

- 2007 Dinyar Vania
- 2004 Mr Farobag Homi Cooper
- 2002 Mrs Bapsy Sidhwa

Paradise Award

- 2002 Ms Tenaz Dubash
- 2000 Mr Sherwin Shahriari

Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Service Award

- 2007 DR Russi Balsara
- 2004 Dr Lovji Cama
- Mrs Mehru Cama
- 2002 Miss Bella Tata
- 1998 Dr Yasmin Ghadialy
- Mr Jamshed Ghadialy
- 1996 Dr Katy Driver
- 1994 Mr Minoo Treasurywala
- 1992 Mr Rustom Irani
- 1990 Mobed Mehraban Zartoshty
- Mrs Paridokht Zartoshty
- 1988 Mrs Sabar E Patel

Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award

- 2007 Mr Dinsha Farrokh Mistree
- 2004 Ms Susan Karani
- 2002 Ms Sherazade Mehta
- 1998 Dr Parastu Dubash
- Mr Orang Demehry
- 1996 Dr Darius Bagli
- 1992 Dr Mehran Sepeheri
- 1990 Mr Sarosh V. Kanga
- 1988 Prof Jamsheed Choksy

Outstanding Zarathushti Student Award

- 2007 Ms Anahita Dua
- 2004 Mr Boman Irani
- 1998 Mr Phiroz Tarapore
- 1996 Mr Arash Anoshiravani
- 1994 Mr Cyrus Hirjibehdin
- 1992 Mr Murzban F. Morris and Dr Shanaya Deboo
- 1990 Mr Neville M. Billimoria
- 1988 Dr Zubin Panthaky

****Awards organized by each Congress 1988 -1994**

Awards organized by FEZANA Awards Committee 1996

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Oral History....

THE ZARATHUSHTI ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Searching For Our Roots



From left Hormuzd Katki, Nawaz Merchant, with son Cyrus Merchant and Dinyar Patel



Mandana Pishdadi, California Zoroastrian Centre
Amoozesh



Annahita Jasavala Zoroastrian Association of
Northern California

Editorials

"If we forget who we are, where we came from, and how we have persisted in spite of amazing odds, there is little reason for us to truly self-identify as Zarathushtis. DINYAR PATEL

This edition of the FEZANA Journal is dedicated to the Zarathushti Oral History Project, an endeavor we are happy to introduce to the community. The project is rather simple in scope: we are encouraging Zarathushti youth to interview elder community members and record their unique stories and experiences. In recent years, many communities in North America and elsewhere have used oral history as a way to create a living archive of knowledge for public reference. Given the varied experiences of North American Zarathushtis, we feel that now is an appropriate time for us to begin such a project.

In the past few months, we have been contacting FEZANA member associations and enquiring about their interest in participating. We have proposed that youth religious classes brainstorm various interview topics -- for example, life during a specific period of time or the observation of various customs and rituals -- and then identify interviewees in their area. FEZANA has been kind enough to allocate money from its annual budget to the project for the purchase of recording equipment. Youth interviewers are also encouraged to write summaries of their discussions. These, as well as the recorded interviews, can be electronically saved for future use. Possible end-products for the Project include a book, documentary, or installations of magazine articles such as those featured here.

The articles included in this edition represent a small sample of the amazing stories that can be gathered from community members. Children in the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California (ZANC) have talked to their relatives in order to find out their family histories. Youth in the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC) gathered one afternoon to talk extensively with elder community members about growing up in Iran. Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) and the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI) have presented the diverse life experiences of local Parsis.

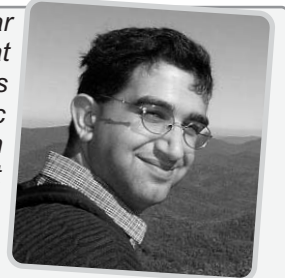
We envision two main goals for the Oral History Project. First, we hope that it can help establish relationships across generational and ethnic boundaries. Wouldn't it be fantastic, for example, for a Parsi youth to interview an Iranian in order to gain better cultural understanding and appreciation? Hopefully, such relationships will last long after the interview is over. Second, we hope that the project will give students a better appreciation of their heritage and culture. As Zarathushtis, we are heirs to one of the world's most ancient and fantastic religious and cultural traditions. It is extremely sad, therefore, that so many of us know so little about who we are. How many Zarathushtis do you know, for example, whose knowledge of their heritage extends

little beyond some unclear link with ancient Persia, prayers they do not understand, and rituals that seem entirely foreign?

Community members can help our youth augment Zarathushti identities through their knowledge and stories. Our elders constitute a remarkable storehouse of knowledge of our history, religion, and culture. Within our community are people who grew up in villages in India and Iran (environments virtually unchanged for millennia) and myriad other places such as China and Africa. Others witnessed the independence of India and Pakistan, walked with Mahatma Gandhi, served in World War II, worked under the Shah of Iran, felt the impact of the Iranian Revolution, and helped build the modern North American diaspora. In our midst are also religious and historical scholars and those who can explain the significance of our traditions and rituals. As importantly, we have people who can, through their life experiences, impart the simple importance of maintaining and understanding our Zarathushti heritage.

In spite of being such a small community, we have generated much internal controversy and inspired debates over several "key problems". Yet, a key problem that is little discussed--yet perhaps more serious than any others--is ignorance. If we forget who we are, where we came from, and how we have persisted in spite of amazing odds, there is little reason for us to truly self-identify as Zarathushtis. A Zarathushti Oral History Project cannot restore forgotten knowledge, memories, and understanding, but perhaps it can be a small first step toward insuring that these losses will not happen again in the future. Furthermore, it can help youth establish stronger identities and an understanding of who they are, critical in our multicultural, diverse society. A strong sense of identity, reinforced by strong relationships across our community, can help us be true to ourselves and our heritage.

Dinyar Patel is a first-year Ph.D. candidate in History at Harvard University. He is hoping to work on a topic related to Parsi involvement in the Indian nationalist movement. In order to become a legitimately poor graduate student, he blew most of his savings on a round-the-world trip to the Middle East, Russia, China, Tibet, Nepal, and India before beginning at Harvard. In the Middle East, Russia, and even Mongolia he was able to trace many Zarathushti and ancient Persian links.



The Zoroastrian Community in North America

The living history of immigration

Nawaz Merchant

Many of us are aware of the "First Migration" of Zarathushtis to India in roughly the year 1000, when our ancestors sought and found refuge first in Diu, and then in Sanjan. In the late 1800s, and early 1900s another set of Zarathushtis migrated to Bombay. These were dubbed the "Iranis" because they were descended from Zarathushti brethren who had remained in Iran, retaining their traditions and religion, despite severe taxes and penalties for refusing to convert to Islam. Once in India, their industrious nature and enterprise soon birthed a number of businesses, particularly restaurants. Irani restaurants were soon known for incomparable delicious, hearty, value priced meals.

These transitions are generally considered the First Migration of Zarathushtis (to India), although many Zarathushtis remained in Iran and many settled in other parts of the world.

The term "Second Migration" generally refers to our migration to North America, and growth of the Zarathushti population outside India. Ever since the 1930s, young men and women who had arrived in North America to study or work, decided to settle here, and their number has grown steadily to the present.

An immigrant goes through four stages:

Stage 1, Euphoria: excitement, enthusiasm and optimism for everything in the host culture

Stage 2, Culture Shock: negativity ranging from irritability to hostility, from anxiety to outright panic

Stage 3, Anomie: gradual recovery of equilibrium and objectivity, acknowledgment of positive and negative aspects of both cultures, for some, an identity crisis

Stage 4, Assimilation or Adoption: acceptance of new culture, recovery of self-confidence and identity

WHAT IS ASSIMILATION? Assimilation should not be misinterpreted as blending in so entirely as to lose one's own original identity. Instead, it is the creation of a new identity, one that is rooted in its fundamental origins, but capable of evolving and adapting, in order to avail itself of opportunities in the new environment. Our North American community is quietly doing just that. As we began upon the Zarathushti Oral History Project, it became apparent that we, in North America have in no way abandoned our origins, but are intensely wedded to them.

Culture without people is meaningless. Therefore this project gave our youth an opportunity to learn about their heritage by meeting those who have lived it, and by hearing them speak about what they hold dear. But we are a part of history. Looking back, while pleasant, is only useful for a people in as far as it changes something, adds strength and perspective to our present, and thus impacts our future. With this perspective, (the youth and seniors both being represented already), we requested the middle generation to write articles about life in North America.

Our material is therefore grouped into three separate sections 1) The Yester Years, 2) Commentaries on Life in North America and Zoroastrian values, and 3) Where the community is headed.

WHAT IS THE NEW ZARATHUSHTI COMMUNITY LIKE? If a community were just a social group, it would be merely a set of 'fair weather friends'. But it is much more. From shared

birthdays and barbeques, weddings and navjotes, comes the support of each other in ill-health, the sharing of grief and times of crisis, and the willingness to help each other in our careers. Communities cohere around activities, like a children's play or fixing a playground swing-set. And they are cemented by joint good works such as critical assistance and scholarship donations, where individuals share an investment in the continued and future wellness of their brethren.

The way we think is also changing. Some social mores are dying away. The perceived 'impureness' of women in their menses, a disdain now seen as a mark of more primitive cultures. Contempt for 'dubras' (darker skinned Indians) is now recognized as a form of racism. But our delight in good old Parsi food, the sweet music of Farsi language, the stories of Rostam and Sohrab, and the quiet commitment to practical goodness continue. This is our strength, the ability to keep our great cultural traditions of altruism and independent thought, while being flexible enough to learn how to navigate and gain confidence in a new environment.

Immigration is a constant flow, rather than an event. Do Indian-born and Iran-born university students in North America have the same cohesiveness toward Zarathushti communities? Apparently, there is a strong inclination, but lacking transportation and sufficient connection to the community to obtain rides to events, as well as the perceived higher cost (in student eyes) of social events tends to reduce that interaction. Perhaps the knowledge that they will relocate when they begin a career also impacts their decision, and influences how much effort they invest in local relationships. Regardless, having a close relationship to a Zarathushti family makes a world of difference to foreign students. Therefore community outreach to these future members is sorely needed, and simply feels like the right thing to do.

To those who fear the future of the Zarathushti culture, I say fear not. We are a people who transcend national boundaries, loyal to the original ideal of reason above all. We have survived, and will flourish. The oral histories continue, and the community adapts. We cannot presume to dictate how it will evolve. Be prepared however; the future will, no doubt, be different than we expect!

Nawaz Merchant is an active member of the New York-New Jersey community and Vice President of Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York. She has organized numerous donations drives to benefit causes such as the Critical Assistance Fund, and clothing drives for victims of disasters. As an amateur writer, she focuses on stories of immigrants and interpersonal relationships.

Educated in Bombay, India, she migrated to the US in 1991 and met her husband, Hoshi, in 1992. After completing a Master's degree in Economics at Northern Illinois University, she embarked on a career in Pharmaceutical business analysis. She is a Manager within the Pharmaceutical Division of Johnson & Johnson and mother of two boys, Sam and Cyrus.



Our changing Identity in India and the US

Hormuzd Katki

There is a wonderful picture in Sooni Taraporewala's 2nd book, *Parsis* (pg. 73) of curious Indians peering at Parsis praying at water during Ava Roj, wondering what they are doing. This picture typifies my feeling that Indians view Parsis with a mixture of curiosity and respect. Among Indians, Parsis are widely respected for wealth and education. Every article I have ever read about Parsis and every Indian I have ever met who has known Parsis praises the Parsis' contributions to India. All Indians benefit from hospitals, roads, schools, charities, and companies created by Parsis, and many of these

institutions are literally the largest and finest in India. The first Indian to do something was quite often a Parsi. The charity of Parsi industrialists is almost legendary. Never have I heard anyone accuse Parsis of being British bootlickers. Yet because Parsis keep to themselves, Indians know little of our religion and culture, and are naturally curious.

In my experience, Parsis see themselves as the ideal Indians, representing the potential of India. Parsis seem to see themselves as standing for what India ought to: personal integrity, peace, education, no caste reservations, equal opportunity, pure meritocracy, exquisite competence, egalitarianism, and respect for all communities. Parsis can also serve as the conscience of India, and this is demonstrated for me by the existence of the movie *Parzania*, a movie about the atrocities committed during communal rioting in Gujarat. Only a Parsi could have made a movie about this controversial topic which was accepted without being accused of communal bias. Liberal or conservative, Parsis revel in their identity as the best Indians, an identity bequeathed by the British.

But when India fails to achieve Parsi standards, Parsis frequently get angry and pessimistic towards India. "The problem with India is..." starts many a social conversation. Worse, sometimes this attitude can descend into snobbery. Especially in Mumbai, Parsis see themselves as the last bastion of civility in an incompetent city gone mad, corrupt, and out-of-control.

Their sense seems to be, Mumbai was stolen from us, the city we built has been ruined, and they even had the gall to rename it. Thus, Mumbai Parsis seem to band together against this incivility by closing the community and shunning those who marry non-Parsis. Although the reasons for

exclusivity may be localized to Mumbai, nevertheless the global Parsi identity seems to be driven by a pride in past achievements in danger of being swamped by a wave of the masses. Orthodox logic therefore dictates that to protect our identity, i.e. our achievements, we Parsis must stay separate by shunning interfaith marriages.

Clearly, our Indian identity is ill-adapted to our new home in America. Parsis know we have not achieved more than white Americans, or even other Asian Americans, in the US. So separation and achievement cannot distinguish us. I propose that we in North America who are descended from Parsis are defined by our Indian heritage and our unique religion and subculture. I take a vicarious pride in the achievements of Indian-Americans, and am thrilled by the wider exposure Indian culture is receiving in the West. So I see Indian-Americans, not as people we should separate from, but as people we should move closer to and take advantage of our common language, history, social/political networks, and resources. Secondly, in order to establish an identity for ourselves in the West, we need educate North Americans about our religion and culture. Every American to whom I have ever told the Saga of the Parsis has been spellbound, even deeply moved. Our story is a story of immigrant pilgrim fathers who escaped religious persecution to achieve material success: this is America's story, cherished by every American. I am positive that our story will find a natural home in America, and thus we may find a permanent home in the West.

Hormuzd Katki was born in the US and has lived in the Washington DC area since he was 3 years old. He is a cancer researcher and statistician at the National Institute of Health. He is currently training to be a Mobediyar under Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaki.



Section I The Yester Years – Interviews and Reminisces

As part of this living history of transition to North America, we sought to document the words and stories of our elders, in interviews carried out by youth, so that such a cultural identity perseveres over the generations. I want to thank all the young interviewers who participated so willingly and the community members who shared their thoughts to inspire the younger generation. This summer, Dinyar Patel looked for signs of the Zarathushti religion in places such as Cappadocia and Aleppo! Even while traveling in faraway places such as Syria and Cairo, found and interviewed notable Zarathushtis and emailed his enthralling 'field reports' from cyber cafes all over the world. Many thanks to Rusi Sorabji, for his interest and enthusiasm for this project, as well as the articles and photographs offered for this issue. **Nawaz Merchant**

Yesteryears reminisces and interviews

A conversation with Ambassador Jamsheed Marker and Arnaz Marker Nawaz Merchant,



Jamsheed Marker is a man with a cultured voice and a wealth of information about surprisingly varied topics. I made the trip to Manhattan to meet him one bright summer morning in June – and was

immediately set at ease by his quiet welcome. While I snapped the pieces of the recording equipment together, my co-interviewer Homi Gandhi (President, ZAGNY) and Mr. Marker reminisced about common friends and their near and dear ones. That thoughtful tone colored the rest of our discussions.

Jamsheed Marker had been Pakistan's Ambassador to the US and many countries for numerous years. "A diplomat is thought to be a slippery fellow" Mr. Marker said, and turned to me with a twinkle in his eye. "But it's not so, you see. There are things we cannot discuss, and if asked, I would simply say that I am not at liberty to answer that question." When asked how he managed to navigate the changing political regimes in Pakistan, he smiled. Each time the regime changed, he said, he would turn in his resignation, and each time, the new regime reappointed him to his post!

Was there ever a time, when following his own ethical compass made it difficult to carry out his duty? "Never" Mr. Marker declared, then referred to a statesman who wrote: It is never difficult to do one's duty, the difficulty is knowing what one's duty is! He recalled a time when he disagreed with the military action taken by Pakistan's administration, and faced the decision of whether he should resign. Instead, he voiced his strong objections, but did not leave his position, choosing instead to work within the existing framework rather than politicize his convictions. Was there a consequence to his outspokenness? "Always." Mr. Marker responded. "And that is part of the choice we make!" This thought process, for me, gives new meaning to the term integrity. Guided by his unerring instinct, and an independent neutrality, Mr. Marker navigated some of the most turbulent times in our subcontinent's history.

While he does not profess to be a very religious man, Mr. Marker acknowledges that he has been guided by our Zarathushti values all his life. And, if actions be the measure of our beliefs, Mr. Marker's record exemplifies the essence of a "Good life". Sent by the United Nations to the war-torn area of East Timor, Mr. Marker negotiated the peace agreements, which enabled that country to gain Independence. "One of every four people in East Timor, had lost a member of his family to violence," said Mr. Marker. This brief phrase captures the strain of belonging to a team of three foreign negotiators in a volatile and explosive situation.

Was he ever afraid? I asked, or daunted by what he was asked to do? "Not really." He replied thoughtfully. "I liked challenge, and sought out how to get it done." He acknowledged that when he led the first mine-sweeper (ship) into Rangoon to liberate Burma, now Myanmar at the close of World War II, the loss of life affected him deeply. Personal tragedies also took their toll upon him, with the passing of his first wife, and an accident that killed his daughter. Did he pray? I ventured to ask at this time. "Not particularly," he responded honestly. I can only surmise that strong family bonds during this time of crisis aided this very private gentleman.

Was there someone who guided you in your youth? I asked, referring to his internal moral compass. In his unique gentle, yet genuine manner, Mr. Marker simply referred to his family upbringing, and the example of his elders. Mrs. Arnaz Marker joined in at this point, to mention that her father's example had strongly influenced her. Her father and other members of the Minwala family were active philanthropists in Karachi, and helped set up a number of institutions such as the baug there, for fellow Zarathushtis.

His diplomatic career has led Mr. and Mrs. Marker to build their home in many different countries and cities of the world, among them Moscow and Japan. How did you manage? I asked Mrs. Marker, with making a start all over, each time, in a new place? "My background was in the hotel industry" Mrs. Marker explained. "I had experience with running my father's hotels, so I was well prepared for running a diplomatic house." And now I began to see some of the secret of Mr. Marker's unique success. In various web-based articles, Mr. Marker is given some of the credit with establishing the excellent relationship that Pakistan enjoys within Congress today. Given a brief glimpse into Mr. Marker's own cultured statesmanship and Mrs. Marker's warm, engaging hospitality, I begin to understand.

"What is your greatest achievement, what are you most proud of?" I asked this man, who has helped a country gain independence, seen military action in World War II, been a United Nations emissary to a war-zone, and represented his country for over thirty years. Mr. Marker took his lovely wife's hand and turned to me with a quiet smile. "Finding Arnaz." He replied.



Oral History **Zarathushti Heritage Lingers From** **The Middle, to The Far East**

Dinyar Patel

in an interview with Adi Davar

Adi Davar, who lives in Metropolitan Washington DC, came from an orthodox Bombay family. He therefore knew our religion and traditions entirely through a Parsi prism. After traveling throughout the Middle & Far East while working for the World Bank, his perspectives on the religion underwent a major change.

Zarathushti connection in Iraq

In 1971, Davar visited Iraq to open dialogue between the Bank and the new Ba'athist regime. Saddam Hussein, then rapidly -accumulating power as vice president, endorsed irrigation projects in Kurdish-populated northern Iraq. Since he wanted assurances that the Kurds would not destroy the infrastructure. Davar went to Mosul and met Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, father of current President of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani, to gauge Kurdish sentiments. Learning that Davar was Zarathushti, Barzani exclaimed: "my brother!", despite being a Muslim. Many Kurds, like Barzani, follow some Zarathushti customs and beliefs. Their Yazidi tribesmen even consider themselves to be Zarathushtra's followers. Barzani therefore wanted Davar to meet the Yazidi Prince Iruch and see a Yazidi fire temple. He drove him to one in a cave: inside, behind a natural stone parapet, stood a stone altar with dying embers. In a corner, hung a bell on a rope to toll changes of "ghaes". While primitive-looking, it had similarities to altars in agyaris - before Parsis introduced afriganyas in the 16th century.

Syria Davar found strong Zarathushti links in other parts of the Middle East where Persian cultural influence has laid dormant for centuries. While in Syria in 1970, Davar was visited by a man who had learnt that he was a Zarathushti, Showing his sudreh and kusti, the

man explained that he and some 500,000 others in mountains south of Damascus, performed kusti prayers every morning facing the sun. Yet, they did not publicize their religious identity. "Since Syria is secular, why should we advertise who we are?", the man said.

Turkey Zarathushti heritage is apparent also in Turkey (ancient Asia Minor) where Davar traveled often for work between 1975 -81, Aristotle was born here, while the region was still under Achaemenian rule, and was later able to tutor Alexander on Zarathushti principles. South-east of Ankara lies Cappadocia, a volcanically-created moonscape of caves, tufa towers and basalt outcroppings, historically known as an early stronghold of Christianity. But before Cappadocia's caves were turned into churches, some were obviously used as Zarathushti fire temples:: a few cave entrances display weather-faded Achaemenian facades and asho farohars. Davar recalls seeing caves with centuries of soot accumulated on ceilings, clearly not from church candles, but from fires on stone alters. On the southern Antalya-Tarsus coastline, ruins of Persian buildings and temples mingle with Greco-Roman ones, asserting over 200 years of Achaemenian rule in Asia Minor.. A well-preserved small-scale replica of Persepolis, constructed by a Zarathushti vassal king, also exists in north-eastern Turkey,

The Silk Road: Beyond Turkey, runs the Silk Road, a highway of ideas as much as of goods and commodities. Sogdia, now mainly Uzbekistan, was an important centre on the road. Its traders, were among the earliest to embrace Zarathushtra's teachings and eventually carried the teachings along the Silk Road to China. In 1993 after the Soviet Union's collapse, Davar

traveled to Uzbekistan for the United Nations Development Program. Despite centuries of Islam and decades of Soviet rule, Davar found strong Zarathushti and Persian links. Uzbekistan's Central Bank Governor proudly showed him a plaque of the national bird, the Simurgh which derives from Zarathushti lore. Learning that Davar was Zarathushti, the bank's officers began reciting stories of Shahnameh heroes, including Zal – Sogdia's mythical founder who was raised by a Simurgh.

In Tashkent the capital of Uzbekistan, he saw a 700 BCE fresco of mobeds with "PADANS", praying before a fire. The Lyabi Khaus, a 16th century complex of Muslim madrassas in Bukhara features an entrance with depictions of simurghs, dogs and the sun, all Zarathushti symbols. In Bukhara he visited a 9th century mausoleum of a Muslim pir. Before it, stood two fire-charred stone altars where, relatives of those buried around the tomb, lit wood fires on them while praying, during the ten days before Naurooz - a practice remarkably similar to "farvardigan or muktads". Denounced as un-Islamic by clerics, Bukharis continued to cling to the practice as one inherited from their forefathers. Davar notes that, "If not the religion, then at least Zarathushti customs and traditions seem to be followed today in Uzbekistan".

Thailand, When a Thai Health Minister met Davar in 1982 he told him "We have something in common". According to the Minister a group of Persians settled in Thailand after 700 CE.. They married Thais but continued to practice the Zarathushti religion for centuries. These individuals and their descendants such as the health minister were known as "Bunnags". (foreigners from Persia). Later some

BUNNAGS married minor members of the Royal family became Buddhists.

China In XI'AN, (ancient Chang), famous for the terra cotta warriors, was where Piroz's defeated army had settled after 640 CE. In Xi'an in 1982 Davar saw a tomb built by a Chinese Mandarin for his Chinese Zarathushti wife. A government archeologist helped shed more light on China's Zarathushti past, mentioning that recent evidence suggested Persian involvement in constructing Xi'an's famous terracotta warriors. Davar also encountered Hui Muslims who claimed Persian lineage and perhaps even descent from Piroz and his army. While visiting a collection of stelae at a museum, the museum director told Davar "Many centuries of your people's history must be recorded in these stelae. Send your Chinese speaking scholars to trace it" Apparently the government of early Chinese dynasties had special ministers for Zarathushti affairs as there were numerous Chinese practitioners of the faith. Centuries later, Piroz's descendants built fire-temples here, Davar later learnt that following a visit

of Prof Farahang Mehr, Peking University set up a Persian Language and History Department in order to better explore China's Zarathushti heritage

Hongkong In late 80s Davar's daughter visited Hong Kong. Since she was fluent in Chinese, the Dastur of the agiary approached her regarding some valuable papers concerning the Zarathushti presence in China long before the era of Parsi traders. He lamented "we have a long history in China. But Zarathushtis are not interested, as they think their history lies only to the west and not to the east. of Iran". Davar alerted the community leaders about these papers but received no signs of interest

Ethnic or Universal Religion: Such anecdotal experiences in the

Middle & Far East, left Davar with a profoundly different impression of the practice of the Zarathushti religion than what he had been raised to believe as a youngster. "It became apparent that our faith is not, and has never been, an ethnic one limited to those only of Iranian descent," he states. "Otherwise, how can one account for the continuation of the practice, of our religion or traditions by people of such differing ethnicities and nationalities?." Davar feels that signs of Zarathushti religious practices and ancient Persian culture - still found in a broad swath of lands east of Europe to China - provide evidence that the Zarathushti religion was a worldwide faith of many ethnicities in many countries. "To restrict it today to a small band of Parsis and Iranians," he concludes, "contradicts historical facts".

Adi Davar, involved with FEZANA since inception, has served on its Planning, Strategy, Education, & Historical Research Committees. Founder-President of ZAMWI. he was also a Trustee on the International Board of WZO. In 2000 he was honored by WZO, as one of the "12 Outstanding World Zarathushtis" for his unique world-wide community contributions. Davar is a researcher, teacher, writer & speaker on the Zarathushti religion its history and contemporary issues. He served as a senior executive in the Tata Group, India and at the World Bank where he retired as a Director of East Asia & Pacific Region. He holds degrees in economics & law from Bombay University and a Masters in International Law from Harvard University. Married to Pervin, he is the father of Binaifer, Rashne & Tamina, and grandfather of Zara & Cyrus.



JAMSHID PISHDADI, an Educationalist and a Community Activist

Jamshid Pishdadi born April 16, 1923, to Zarbanoo Dinyar and Rostam Ardeshtir in Yazd, Iran, developed from a very early age, an appreciation for his Zarathushti religion, and at age 16 wrote his first poem and announced his choosing of the good religion.

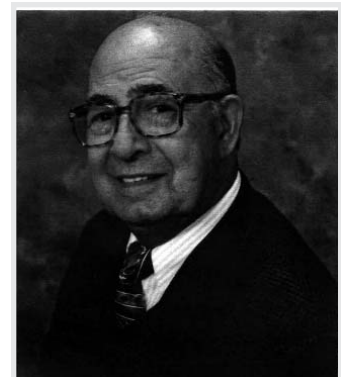
Youth Mr. Pishdadi's favorite subject in school was Persian literature. Gifted with a great imagination and being a born leader, he wrote and directed a number of plays in high school which were performed in front of live audiences. At age 17 he and his friends established the first Zoroastrian

Youth Organization (Sazeman) of Yazd.

At age 18 he launched his career as an educator which lasted for over 31 years. His first professional position was as a principal of a primary school in Kouche-Buik (in the province of Yazd) school that had been started through the educational initiatives of Manekji Limji Hateria.

At the same time he was also a member of the Mazdayasnan Society which comprised of members from Zoroastrian Society and Kankash Mobadan of Yazd. In this position,

Khosro Mehrfar



Mr. Pishdadi along with other members would visit area around Yazd province every month and give speeches about the Zarthushti religion.

Educationalist A few years later, he accepted a teaching position at Yazd's Keykhosravi high-school which lasted for 3 years. At the same time he was appointed as the vice-president of the Yazd chapter of the Society for the Amelioration of the Zoroastrians of Persia. He became assistant to Mr. Jahanbakhsh Daruvala, the head of the Yazd chapter of the Society. As an assistant, Mr. Pishdadi was responsible for coordination and supervision of 13 Zarthushti primary schools for boys in Yazd and its districts (Ardakan and Taft).

At age 22 he moved to Tehran to continue his higher education and started working at Firooz-Bahram high-school, the only Zarthushti high-school for boys in Tehran. Many Zarthushti and non-Zarthushti boys studied there and came to know Mr. Pishdadi as their teacher, dean and assistant principal. He had an exceptional charisma and students would consider him as a friend as well as a mentor. A number of government officials, Prime Minister Hassan Ali Mansur, and the minister of social reforms, Houchang Nahavandi were among his students at Firooz-Bahram. Mr. Pishdadi has written a book about his memories as an assistant principal in "Firooz-Bahram" where he shares number of amazing stories with his readers.

Family Life In 1955 Jamshid Pishdadi married Farangis Keikhosrow Jehanian. They have three daughters Mitra, Mandana and Armita. Following his retirement from his educational career, he served for 10 years as the manager of the Ashtad Motors manufacturing Company in Iran. In 1983, four years into the Iranian Islamic revolution, Mr. Pishdadi and his wife left Iran for Canada, and soon after they moved to Northern California to be close to their daughters who had come to the U.S. as students.

Community Work Mr. Pishdadi has always been an active member of the Zarthushti community, serving

as a member of Zarthushti Youth committee of Tehran; President of Zoroastrian Bashgah of Tehran; and a member of Board of Directors for Fravahar organization (Sazeman) of Tehran. In the US, he has been an honorary member of the Council of Iranian Mobeds of Northern America.(CIMNA)

Children's books An educator's work is never over, and Jamshid Pishdadi was the first to write a series of books for Zarthushti children to teach them basics of the religion in simple words. Deen Amooz is a series of five text books, the only series approved by the Government of Iran, to be taught at Tehran Fravahar organization (Sazeman) to prepare children for their religious studies. He also wrote three poetry story books; Agha Bijan, Amoo Nowruz and Mehregan to familiarize kids with their Zarthushti celebrations and values. There is also series of five story books for children that teach them about our prophet Zarathushtra.

Mr. Pishdadi continued his work as an educator with the publication of "Vohuman", a biweekly community newsletter that he distributed free of charge to community members. He has written over 200 articles and plays which were published in numerous magazines and newspapers in Iran and US. He has also given a number of educational lectures in Yazd, Tehran and US.

The following is a list of 25 publications by Mr. Jamshid Pishdadi (Sheida):

- Farvardin present 1326 – Poems, dramas and Zarthushti folkloric tales published in year 1947.
- Five religious text book series (Deen Amooz) – Taught in Tehran Sazeman Fravahar classes and schools for Zarathushtis (Farsi) (Sazeman Fravahar publication)
- Three poetry story books for kids (Agha Bijan, Amoo Nowruz, Mehregan) – Teaching children Zarthushti values and celebrations (Farsi)

- Five religious story books for children (Zan'e ghahreman; Pesar'e khoob; Sar-cheshmeh; Gohar'e shab-cheragh; Sokhanan'e Mahin Zarthusht'e Espantaman) – Helping build religious belief in young minds (Farsi)
- Memories of 365 days – The Zarthushti Culture and Traditions in past 200 years (Farsi)
- Life story of Ostad Poordavood (Kankash Moobedan publication) (Farsi)
- The Petals – Gahanbars (cooperations) and Ziaratgahs (shrines) – The proud traditions of our ancestors. (Farsi/English)
- The life and work of Mirza Soroush Lohrasb (Farsi)
- Lalayee "Lullabies"- Seven true stories from the proud tradition of our ancestors (Farsi/ English)
- Lalayee "Lullabies" 2 – True stories of our ancestors and poems (Farsi)
- Shoor'e Sheida – Poems in Farsi and Dari (Zarthushti Dialog)
- My memories as an educator – which includes 200 years history of Zarthushti community education (Farsi)
- A Few Selections from the Religion and Culture of Zarathushstis (1st and 2nd print in LA, Farsi/English; 3rd print in Iran, Farsi; 4th print in process in LA) – Short and comprehensive review of the overall essentials of the Zarathushti religion.
- The life story of Moubed Mehrban Moubed Jamshid Zarthushti (Farsi)
- What happened to us – Stories of our ancestors' bravery over 1400 years to preserve our religion (Farsi)

PARSI PRESENCE IN THE GULF STATES

Oral History

An Interview with Esadvaster (Ester) Bamji by Dinyar Patel

When Esadvaster (Ester) Bamji opened an encyclopedia and first read about Bahrain, he was "taken aback": it consisted of a sandy archipelago, infested with mosquitoes, with brackish water and little else. Yet, in 1951 Bamji moved to Bahrain to join the British Norwich Union Life Insurance Society. A thinly populated Arab emirate in the middle of the Persian Gulf, Bahrain seemed a world away from the familiarities of Bombay. However, Bamji's story illustrates how widespread the Parsi presence was in the Gulf region—a region where, in the early second half of the 20th century, one would hardly expect to find any Zarathushtis.

Bamji, one of nine children, was born in Tardeo in Bombay and grew up in Dadar Parsi Colony, which not much earlier used to be "a total forest". As a child, he watched Marine Drive come up on pylons sunk into the Arabian Sea. Bamji's parents were "very open minded": they gave no objection to their son's plans to go to Bahrain, which already had several links with India. During the British Raj, it was under the jurisdiction of the British viceroy in Delhi. The country was also an important stopping point for air routes between London and India. Significantly, Bahrain used the Indian rupee as its currency.

Parsis of Bahrain: When he arrived in the capital city of Manama, Bamji knew of eight Parsis already living there. He soon accidentally discovered a few more. Having sent a telegram informing his parents of his safe arrival, he received a call from one Jal Patel, an employee for Cable & Wireless (a major British communication company that ran communications in the Gulf), who had seen his outgoing message. Patel informed Bamji that he had another Parsi working with him by the name of Phiroze Captain. Later, Bamji came across yet another Parsi, Adi Lawyer, lodged in his guesthouse.

Life in Bahrain: Despite being the most advanced Gulf state, Bahrain was understandably not an easy place

to live. "For the first few months, I was absolutely miserable, until I found my feet," recalls Bamji. Bahraini summers were so scorching hot that, along with other bachelors, Bamji would drive out into the desert in search of a relatively cool place to sleep. "From there, we would wake up well before dawn, when the flies started bothering us, and drive back to Manama," he continues. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Bamji witnessed several fist fights breaking out at Manama's ice factory over this precious commodity. Yet, such difficulties helped forge "tremendous bonhomie" between Bamji and other Indian friends he made in Bahrain. *(Photos below Cooking food for the picnic, at poolside picnic)*

First Aramgah in the Gulf: By the 1960s, the Parsi community in Bahrain had grown to over forty people. Bahrain even had one Iranian Zarathushti family. As it grew, the small community was faced with new challenges. In the early 1950s, a Parsi lady suffered a miscarriage. "No one knew what to do with the baby," says Bamji; Bahrain's tiny Hindu community finally agreed to intern the baby on their cremation grounds. This incident created a major concern for the community: what would happen should an adult pass away? Sheikh Sulman bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, the ruler of Bahrain, was approached and immediately approved a 100-foot-by-100-foot plot of land for a Zarathushti aramgah (cemetery). Unfortunately, even before the land could be found and officially registered the community faced another tragedy. A young lady, Kety Sorabji, suddenly passed away not long after she had moved from Iran to Manama with her husband,

Minoo. Her death sped up the bureaucracy behind land registration and Kety Sorabji became the first person interned in the Zarathushti cemetery in Bahrain, a small plot of desert hurriedly fenced off with barbed wire.

Zarathushti Presence in the Gulf: While visiting Kuwait, Bamji found a Parsi roommate, Bejan Sorabji, and he later learned that around six to eight Parsis lived in Kuwait, all "exceptionally friendly." Traveling to Dubai in the late 1950s, Bamji found only one Zarathushti. Dubai was then starkly different from the ultramodern metropolis of today. It was known as the principal



gateway for smuggling goods into India, Pakistan and Iran. This booming business—along with the growing influence of Bollywood films—resulted in Hindi being the virtual lingua franca of Dubai. As the rupee remained the standard currency, the Indian government began issuing different colored notes for use in the Gulf to identify smuggling networks.

The Dubai Zarathushti community flourished as a result of the death of the old stronghold in Aden, Yemen. Communist forces took over Aden in 1967 and confiscated foreign-owned properties; at least one Parsi, Noshir Adenwala, was detained and not permitted to leave Aden for several years. Noshir's brother, Cawas, moved to Dubai and set up Allied Enterprises there, which soon flourished. Motivala's success attracted other Parsis and the Zarathushti population in Dubai quickly eclipsed 200. In neighboring Oman, several Parsis moved to Muscat after Shapurji Pallonji won the contract to build the royal palace in the 1960s.

Every three years, Bamji would take leave and return to Bombay. In 1960, he met his future wife, Roshan, who



he married the following year; with Roshan another Zarathushti was added to the Bahrain community. In 1969, the couple purchased a Mercedes car but decided it would be much more interesting to pick it up directly from the factory in Germany. Keys to the car in hand, the two traveled all over Europe. While on the Isle of Skye, they spent an entire night watching Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the Moon. They had to convince the owner of the bed-and-breakfast to keep the television on through the night, promising the purchase of a new television should the set blow up from over-heating. From Europe they drove back to Bahrain via Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Iran. At Bushire, Iran, they sailed home to Manama on a dhow laden with crates of fruits. (photo left)

Move to US: By the 1970s, the Parsi population in Bahrain reached around 100 but then began declining. Ester retired from Norwich Union in 1991 but the couple stayed on in Bahrain until 1995 when they moved to Washington, DC to be close to their sons. "By the time we left Bahrain, people considered us Bahrainis," Ester states, "and thought we were kidding about our move." The Parsi community of Bahrain is now around 40 people but remains a significant Zarathushti center for the region. Before the arrival of the first Parsis, Bahrain's only Zarathushti link was the thousands of Iranian burial mounds scattered in the desert, some undoubtedly dating from ancient Persia. The emirate now has a living Zarathushti link -- small, yet vibrant.

For Bio on author Dinyar Patel see page 39

From China to Egypt to the US

DOLLY BAMJI IN AN INTERVIEW WITH GUSTAD MODY

I was tasked to interview Dolly Bamji for the Zoroastrian Oral History Project. Its purpose is to help us document and preserve the rich heritage and history of our community. In preparing for the interview, I considered the variety of sample topics provided. However, I felt that these subjects were unfamiliar to me or they would have restricted the conversation. I decided an open ended interview would be more fun.

Upon calling Dolly and scheduling the interview, just before we got off the phone she said she would give me a starting point with the knowledge that she was born in China. The interview was quite enlightening, covering three main periods of her life. She described her life, starting from her first memories as a child and growing up in a war-stricken China, to living as a newlywed in Egypt, to having children in the US. She was in China,

as a child when the Japanese invaded her small town. She was stuck in school and the armed soldiers would not let the children go home, so she could not go back to her parents. A very difficult time, for all of them, but they weathered the storm.

The interview reminded me of how our community has adjusted and thrived in any new surrounding. It also gave me a peek into the past and what life was like from one person's perspective.

Most importantly, it has sparked my curiosity of the life and experiences of my grandma and parents, which makes for great conversation amongst my family.

Gustad Mody, is a Software Testing Specialist, doing consulting for major financial firms in New York City. In his leisure time, he can frequently be found in the kitchen experimenting with his passion for cooking. Living in the city, he takes full advantage of its culinary prowess, cultural vivacity, and diversity in everything it has to offer.



Our Precious Seniors: The Legacy of my Grandmother

Rashna Madon

Oral History

Khorshed Contractor, my grandmother, was a tall, no-nonsense woman. I recall her incredible physical stamina – she walked a lot, very fast. What impressed me the most was her simplicity and how well she lived within her means. Her values were solid and deeply ingrained. She stitched and sewed and mended. She had learned to stretch every last penny, and wasted little. She sewed all

our sadras and monogrammed them with tiny cross-stitched initials. That was her trademark.

With the passing of my grandmother, an era ended. It was a mythical time of long summer and winter vacations in Broach, (in Gujarat state) the big sprawling bungalow, the smell of sandalwood wafting by my bedside at dawn, followed by eggs scrambled in pure ghee, the hens grazing at crumbs through the house because the doors were always wide open. Stray dogs that stopped by for scraps became regulars. The hired-help who worked about the house became like members of our family.

My grandmother left school in the eighth grade, because her own mother passed away and she had to look after her brothers and sisters. She missed her schooling. At age 92, she would still tell me that her proudest memory was of when she stood first in fourth standard. My mother would send magazines from Bombay, which my grandmother would read in the long, hot afternoons of Broach (Bharuch). In return, we got parcels of delectable, homemade sweets!

And as with all lives, her life-story unfolded with some sadness too. But she was a quiet lady who bore all her troubles with a 'patient shrug' and an unending faith in Ahura Mazda. Her favorite phrase was "Live according to what God gives you". At the end of her life it seemed that she had asked for little and given a lot. Her blue 'inland

letter' wishing us well would mark every birthday, anniversary, navroze and papeti! She made jowra rotlis for her servants, every day, by the dozen and prayed Adibesht Yasht over wounded stray dogs and grew vegetables and flowers.

I could go on and on. Her life, to me, is like an epic poem. You may not understand it all, word for word, but its sweep is grand, its vision panoramic, its vibrant intensity compelling. And yet, as you read on, its simplicity and sincerity humbles you.

I try to cook like her, "with heart", a lot of heart. I feed birds and tend my garden because of her. On the anniversary of her death we light a divo (oil lamp) in the garden. I hope that puts a smile on her face as she looks around at my own piece of heaven!

Rashna Madon is a teacher who lives in Old Bridge NJ, with her husband Phiroz Madon, two children and a cat. In her spare time she likes painting, gardening and cooking.

Granny's House –A Poem

Written in 1998 by granddaughters Khursheed Parakh and Nawaz Merchant Written in 1998

*Where the matka stands where it always stood
And time never seems to move
And the air is thick with memories
Of a long ago neighborhood.*

*My mind goes back to the rainy days
And the games of make believe
And the wonderful jars and spices
In my granny's takabaree.*

*And the crunch-crunch of gravel underfoot
Will always take me back
To children listening on a hot summer's day
For the chikiwalla's rat-a- tat-tat.*

*Mumra and Sing, chiki and chocolates
Ambakalyo, aachar, and cheese!
Siesta time, the stirring of milk
And the hum of a hot fan's breeze.*

*Scents and sounds, fun and games
Un-ending days without care
Granny's house in Poona,
Our hearts keep taking us there.*



“Our dreams & thoughts don't ever retire!”

Homai D. Sethna

Living a Good Life – is it difficult

To live & enjoy good life comes from within each individual, though of course environment plays an important part in it. Children who are brought up in a healthy & tension-free environment bloom & grow both physically & mentally & in the long run become assets not only to their own community, but to the world at large. Leading a good life comes to them naturally & they in turn set an excellent example to those around them. It also to a certain extent depends upon each individual as to how he/she faces various challenges hurled at him/her from time to time.

Here I will narrate one incident from my life which has left a lasting impression on my mind. Our parents had to struggle real hard on the meager income my Dad received from his job & had to support 4 of us (2 brothers & 2 sisters). But I must say they braved it all with a practical and cheerful spirit. Despite their difficulties, my Mom wanted to give her children the best education & she had Alexandra Girls" School in mind for her 2 daughters (my sister. & myself). So she bravely approached our school principal & honestly told her about our family's meager income, and pleaded with her to do the best she can to admit two of us in her school. Knowing my mother's genuine plight our Principal admitted my sister in school totally free, and I was admitted at just half the regular school fee. Thus we got admission in a reputed school of learning.

Now this school had girls coming from the “nouveau riche” class who could afford the best of things in life e.g. good uniforms, good school bags & above all writing pens, which we craved to possess but dare not approach our parents. We too wanted to show off in certain ways and be on par with our friends. So we hit upon a solution! When we noticed

writing pens that other girls had discarded, we would retrieve them & proudly place on our school uniform pockets.

There are so many such instances. But more than anything else, what I realize is that what we are today is all because of the sacrifices our parents made, to give us the best possible education, and enable us to proudly face various challenges that would come our way in life. What we are today we owe entirely to our loveable parents who made the best things possible for us, sacrificing sometimes even their pride to request aid, and all to give us a good, healthy life.

We must remember one important thing in life. Life always gives you back what you give out - your life is not a coincidence but a mirror of your own doings. **There are 4 things you cannot recover: The Stone - once shot, the Word – once spoken, the Occasion - once lost and Time once it's past.** So keeping this maxim in mind, one must try to lead a good & healthy life which leads to happiness. Our Zarathushti religion lays stress on Good Thoughts - Good Words - Good Deeds. If we follow this divine principle we shall never falter in life & spread love & happiness around us. I end with an age-old saying -



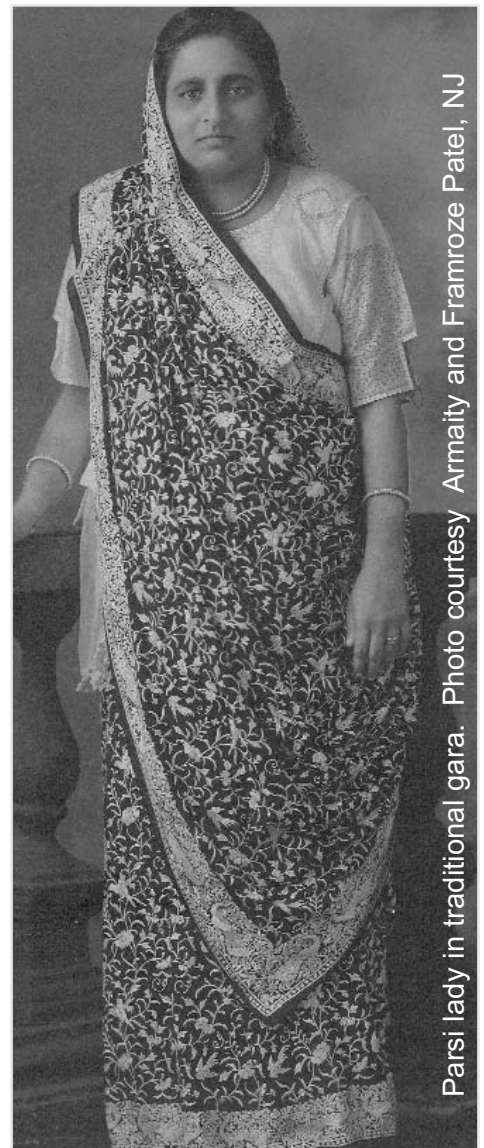
Sam Merchant blessed by grandmother on his birthday Photo Nawaz Merchant

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Oral History

TO LIVE IN THE HEARTS OF
THOSE
WE LEAVE BEHIND
IS NOT TO DIE.

Mrs Homai Sethna is a fond grandmother who believes "Our dreams and thoughts don't ever retire. Retirement is not a Rocking chair I want to surrender to."



Parsi lady in traditional gara. Photo courtesy Armaity and Framroze Patel, NJ

Always in Red and Never in Zero

(One of Our Cultural Idiosyncrasies)

Dinaz Rogers

Oral History

"I believe I have a mission, and that I have many stories to tell on many levels--on a personal level, on the familial level, and on the historical-social level." Marilyn Chin.

"History counts its skeletons in round numbers

A thousand and one remains a thousand

As though the one had never existed."

Wisława Szymborska

For us Persians, Parsis, Zarathushtis all, that ONE in the above quote has never been forgotten. When making a Pehramni (gift envelope), be it for a wedding, navjote*, birthday or any other celebratory occasion, the cash was always in an odd number—never ending in zero. Ten rupees became eleven; a hundred rupee note was never without its one-rupee note. Certain numbers were considered most auspicious. Thus the Parikoo (an envelope with cash) was given as one of the following: seven, eleven, fifteen, twenty-one, thirty-one, fifty-one, seventy-five, and one hundred and one—and never any of the numbers in between. My aunt told me that this ritual of not ending a pehramni, in a zero might be that zero is: nil, naught, nothing, zip, zilch...a negative connotation. So why end anything in a zero?

Here in the USA I have carried on this Parikoo (good wishes greetings envelope) tradition with my children. My daughters know that a fifty dollar bill shall not mark their birthdays; a dollar bill will always raise the fifty to fifty-one!!

Another must when preparing a parikoo: good wishes and names are never written in black ink but always in red. (In photo birthday

Ses with "parikoo" written in red) In recent years some have bent the rules by substituting green for red ink. Though black is the color of mourning in most cultures, white is the primary color of mourning among the Hindus of India. Many Hindus, modern and traditional, find it dreadful that white is the color for the bridal gown in Western culture and for the bridal saris in our Parsi community. At Hindu weddings, the brides are all decked out in saris of reds and greens embroidered with gold threads, beads and sequences.

If an even number of bills is unlucky, then why did Darius the Great have an army of Ten-thousand Immortals? These immortals were ever-ready-for-battle throughout the Persian Empire and if one soldier was felled, lost a limb or an eye or was injured in any other way; he was promptly replaced by an able-bodied warrior, thus keeping the number at a constant ten thousand! Had our Darius (a Parsa, son of a Parsa) lived in our times, may perhaps, as a good Parsi he would have had an army of Ten-thousand and One Immortals.

Toward the end of our Paak (holy) Khordeh Avesta (our prayer book) is the Yuk-sud-o-yuk-eesum---Khodana ache-so-EEK nam-oo --- God's One hundred and One Names. The list starts with Yazad, Worthy of



Worship, and 101th is Frash-gar, "Frashogard", the restorer through the increase of the soul. These one hundred and one names reveal the nature of God. Such insight was reached thousands of years ago by our Zarathushtra. Later adopted by other religions, these names speak for the original thoughts evoked in Zarathushti Deen. I urge my readers to read all hundred and one names, along with their translations—it is quite enlightening.

***navjote=initiation ceremony of Zarathushti Children into the faith.**

Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a teacher and a published writer. She thinks of herself as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed: sowing not apple seeds but hope, knowledge, inspiration pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaego and its ancient faith--Zarathushti deen

(photo of SES courtesy Nawaz Merchant)



BETWEEN THE MOSQUE AND THE TEMPLE

Banu Seervai was awakened every morning by the crowing, kuk-re-ku, of the rooster, and out of her four poster bed almost as soon as she was awake. It was still dark, but the dubri, Pemmy, was already sweeping the floors – and, when Banu got out of bed, Pemmy folded the blankets and raised the mosquito net. As she got older Banu relied increasingly on Pemmy, not only for household chores but companionship.

The sun rose as Banu said her kusti prayers, and the other morning birds (koels, sparrows, bulbuls) announced their presence. She said an extra Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer because she was anxious about the outcome of the day. As Chairman of the Navsari Sanitation Committee, Banu had to settle a dispute between a Hindu and Musalman faction about the placement of a rubbish bin. The Hindus said it was too close to their temple; the Musalmans said it was too close to their mosque. The Collector, who was responsible for the collection of revenue in the surrounding wadis, had warned that a bloodbath might ensue if she was not careful. It was not safe for a man, let alone a woman, but Banu had said she was the chairman and set a day to examine the site.

After the extra prayer Banu wore a plain cotton blouse, plain sari with a plain border, and plain black walking shoes with plain brass buckles to look more businesslike. She never wore the more frivolous accouterments: bangles and rings and tilas. She breakfasted on one egg, one slice of bread, a cup of tea which she slurped from the saucer, while listening to the news on her Murphy radio. The Collector sent a car for her, but she sent it back. She had chosen to walk: it wasn't far and she wanted to show herself as one of the people; but she was glad that the two committee members who had come with the car had stayed. They would be little help in a riot, but she was glad for their moral support.

The day was hot and she held up the sash of her sari to shield her eyes from the sun. Along the way she was recognized by a group of students. "Saebji, Banubai, tamhe kem chho? How are you?" Banu stopped for a moment. "Sari kani, I am well, but we have got work to do. We cannot wait around for chitchat."

"Where you are going, Banubai?"

Banu smiled suddenly; there were Hindus and Musalmans among the students; an idea struck her. She remembered Gandhi's salt march during which Hindus and Musalmans of both genders and all castes and ages had united in a show of solidarity against the English. "Comecome, see for yourselves. We are not going far. Everybody, come."

The students followed and more people joined them as they walked, six women with baskets of vegetables on their heads on their way to the Mota Bajar, two men carrying a crate of tiffins between them on their heads on their way to the college, chanawallahs doing business as they walked, other hawkers, begging children, street animals, an acrobat. The students were jaunty, as if they were on a picnic. "Comecome. Come, see what is going to happen."

Soon the Collector's car approached again and the Collector himself got out. "Why you didn't want the car, Banubai? It would have been better, don't you think?"

Banu gestured with her hand. "Come with us. See for yourself."

The Collector understood. The retinue Banu was building for herself was more impressive than a Rolls Royce. The populist was always more effective than the aristocratic approach. He took his place by her side.

Banu led the parade, the men mostly in white, the women more gaily dressed, with dogs and goats and chickens, along the dusty wadis, the dirt paths, the cobbled streets, past the tiny huddled shops of the cobblers, tailors, potters, and other artisans, around phlegmatic cows swishing tails at flies, past pyramids of dry dung, amid a constant ringing of bicycle bells and honking of scooter hooters. When a white cow stood in their path, Banu genuflected and others did the same. She was enjoying herself: if she had somersaulted she was sure others would have done the same.

When they got to the rubbish bin, the Hindu and Musalman spokesmen and their followers stared, mouths open, not just at the crowd but that the chairman was a woman. The Hindu, a fat man with a red handkerchief knotted at its four corners on his head, a kurta, a dhoti, and chappals was the first to speak. "Maiji, you are the chairman? You are the chairman?"

Banu smiled. "Yes. Why you are so surprised?"

"Nothingnothing, but you are the chairman?"

The Musalman was darker, wearing a red fez with a black tassel, a brown jacket buttoned to his neck even in the heat, and brown tailored pants which revealed red socks at his ankles over worn dusty brown shoes. He said nothing, but his brow was wrinkled in puzzlement so that his eyebrows became one long ridge.

Banu got to the point. "The solution is simple, but we have got to be reasonable. We have got to find the place exactly between the mosque and the temple. I want you both to walk with me from the

mosque to the temple and count my footsteps."

Banu spoke with such assurance that a passerby would have thought she had rehearsed the event. The Musalman walked grudgingly, stiffly, a little to the side as if he were not with them, his brow still wrinkled as if he were thinking important thoughts, counting in his mind. The Hindu walked with Banu, counting loudly in a singsong voice as if he were learning numbers in school. The crowd counted along just to add thunder to the proceedings.

They counted exactly two hundred and thirty-two steps to the temple. Banu turned to the enthusiastic crowd. "Now, what is half of two hundred and thirty-two?"

A number of cheerful voices chorused in reply. "One hundred and sixteen, Maiji. One hundred and sixteen."

She asked them to count with her again as she walked back to the mosque and stopped at a hundred and sixteen. "This is the middle point. This is where you must put the bin." It meant moving the bin closer to the temple and farther from the mosque. Banu was relieved because she felt the Hindu would give in more easily than the Musalman. "This is the best place. This is the fair place. What do you think?" She looked squarely at the Hindu.

The Hindu looked at his followers who nodded. He beamed. "It is fair, Maiji. It is fair." The Musalman did not smile, said nothing, but nodded his approval without even looking at his faction. Both thanked her, said it was a wise decision, they were indebted to her, if she needed them for anything they would definitely come.

Banu smiled, relating the story later. "Anyone could have provided the solution, but it helped that so many came with me, also that I was a Parsi, not a Hindu or a Musalman – and it helped even more that I was a woman. That just surprised them too much to argue."

Boman Desai is a novelist. "Between the Mosque and the Temple" is excerpted from his novel, The Memory of Elephants [University of Chicago

Press], and adapted from an incident in the life of his grandmother, Soonamai Desai of Navsari. Please visit his website (bomandesai.com) for more information.



Daily Luban Ritual - burning sandal wood & incense

Rusi R. Sorabji, Campbell.Ca.
rusi@sorabji.org

"One of the daily rituals in Parsi/Irani homes in India of the early 20th Century that brings back happy memories of our childhood--of a bygone era, when the days had more hours, families had more members, dinning tables had more chairs, we were more religious and the community felt like a large close knit happy and contented family, always in concert with each other always helpful-- is the daily ritual of "luban" (incense)

1930s there was no gas or electric stoves except in parts of Bombay or Karachi. The LUBAN did the round of the rooms in the morning also, but we were then well on the way to school.

The prayer table was where mom or dad, who so ever first got 'ready' in the morning, would light the "Divo". The kids got their turns on

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lights that the BATTIWALLA's as a profession lit

I now feel sad to find this beautiful daily luban ritual has almost disappeared with our relocating in this global village".



Reminiscing of those days, in my mind's eye, I caught glimpses of mom or grandmother gliding by at sun-down with the silver or German-Silver "afargan" through each room as did the grayish-blue smoke, fragrant with sukhar (sandal wood), luban (incense), agar that when mixed with the scent of tube-roses, or jasmine or 'motia.' (Arabian jasmine) from the cut flowers on the prayer table or in the rooms was a heavenly experience. With one small hand we, brothers, sister, aunts and uncles would cover our heads and with the other add a pinch of "vhare" (ashes), luban or agar, then hurriedly putting both hands together, say an Ashem Vohu. Then with both hands we would pull the smoke towards us. At the end of the round of the house, the Afargan was placed at the "prayer table" and before the charcoal embers died they'd be transferred to the coal burning "choo-low" (stove). In the



their birthdays. The divo used to be a short glass partly filled with water topped with either pure ghee, cooking oil or special oil-lamp media with a long "kakrow", (i.e. wick) held by a metallic clip or a floating 'kakrow' on a cork float or even a candle that was kept lit continuously. As pure ghee became expensive, ghee was only used on festive occasions or on birthdays. In our uncle's house in Bombay the 'divo' was suspended from the ceiling in all the main rooms, in an old fashioned chandelier, like you find in some of the Atash Behrams. Maybe it was something left over from the pre-electricity days and these were the

"A twenty plus something who has been writing for pleasure for over 50 years".

Rusi is an economist turned engineer, with a career spanning 47 yrs of rich & varied professional experiences at mid and top management levels, in fields as diversified as: Refrigeration to Refineries & Petrochemicals, Palaces, Air Ports, Power Generation to Off-Shore Hydro-Carbon Services, with Companies like; Godrej, Bechtel /Engineers India Ltd, Hitachi, Rolls Royce Industrial & Marine Turbines. His services as guest lecturer were in constant demand by the top Industrial Organizations and Management Institutes in India. Was Chairman & National Councilor, National Association of Materials Management New Delhi India 1973-77. Last 20 years of his career were spent on the Southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

A multi-talented personality, Rusi is an award winning photographer, an avid traveler, an all round sportsman with hobbies which include music, trekking in the Himalayas, and model aircraft flying. (Photos courtesy Rusi Sorabji)



Zarathushti Family Values:

Truth, Fairness, Working hard

Khursheed Parakh and
Nawaz Merchant

*Oral
History*

Growing up in a Parsi

Zarathushti home, some of my earliest memories are of my parents homilies, teaching us "Honesty is the best policy", that "Anything worth doing was worth doing well" and that "We don't take what is not ours". We were taught a number of values that were explained to us, demonstrated through stories and reading, but above all, were exemplified by our parents. As a

very young child I recall visiting "Old-Fuji" (my father's widowed aunt) with my parents. I remember Old-Fuji's joy when we surprised her with a pink woolly blanket, and Dad unfurled it wide, over the four-poster in her one-room apartment!) Caring was a way of life, so commonplace that it was not even given a name. Our uncles in Poona, took us on their visits to elderly friends and relatives - somewhere in my toddler memory is an old lady who loved the tiny sugar coated sweets called 'hundreds and thousands', and our uncle, buying a small brown paper bag filled with them, to bring to her. Despite our modest means, caring was never restricted to family and relatives alone - when our family stopped at "Waikiki" to enjoy delicious ice-cream cones, where was my Dad? Ah, here he was, hurrying to rejoin the group,

after buying a couple of cones for the urchins hunkering beside the stall.

Pay your way", "Do your best" "Always try hard"...Somewhere along the way, the oft-repeated phrases became a core principle of my life - my touchstone for decision-making. Being honest and speaking the truth, no matter how difficult that choice sometimes was, became a way of being, sort of a mirror for myself to look into. However, the sort of ideal conduct ingrained into us, as children, sometimes got us into awkward situations, such as when, as a young professional, we might openly point out the impracticality of someone's idea. Yes, youthful enthusiasm for "telling the truth" and speaking up can sometimes lead one to forget more subtle matters such as considering who is present, allowing others to save face, biding one's time

and so on. With time, these concepts as well, came to have a place within my values.

Fairness and working hard were other values that we learnt from watching our parents approach every thing they did. Now we were simply a middle-class family with the usual challenges of balancing multiple needs of present and future wants. What I picked up early on, was that there was a nobility in doing the right thing, a grace in working hard and honestly; that one didn't need to cheat and lie and steal in order to get somewhere in life. These principles, sadly, put my siblings and myself at odds with the world around us, as we came of age, in the 80s in Mumbai. Watching other children cheat in the SSC exam was an infuriating experience for us, as teenagers, and one that instilled within us a fair



Family of Jal D.B. Irani 1926 grandparents of Rusi Sorabji of Campbell, Ca.

Dinbai Irani in colored sari, the first lady entrepreneur in Delhi 1920. The young lady in sari age 16 is Kumi, mother of Rusi Sorabji

(Photo courtesy Rusi Sorabji)

Zarathushti Family Values.....(Contd)

contempt for corruption, even when discovered within our own peers. It was then we knew we were different, and could no more learn the street-smart savviness of the younger generation, than we could assume the 'that's life' world-weariness of the older generation. We viewed the working world as something of a rat-race, a view somewhat mitigated, despite the anxiety of migrating, when we found acceptance and decent jobs in the US.

What caused such a divergence (from the average teen) in our thinking? When I was old enough and curious enough to read some of our scriptures that have been translated into English, I was struck by the recurrence of this one theme of Ashoi or Asha i.e. Righteousness. This concept seems to be a very strong theme in our religious scripture and it makes sense that we strive to function so as to embrace that word in every aspect of living. After all, Humata, Hukhta and Huvarashtra, Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds is nothing but the application of the concept of Righteousness into the core functions of daily life. As a child, I learnt to say the Ashem Vohu and Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayers long before I ever knew what they truly meant. My parents explained them to me when I was young as being a way to have God watch over me, that saying the prayers would ensure that I was never scared, that the right words and decisions would come to me.

Today as an adult, I still return to these prayers whenever I need guidance, am afraid, or anxious about a big decision. I am grateful for the values that I learnt as a Zarathushti Parsi, proud that they are a big part of who I am today and very glad of their influence on my thoughts and actions.

Who we are, comes from our family dynamics. In some sense, our specific family values were taken for granted, as though it was understood that we would follow the adage "Family comes first". But it went deeper than sporadic family vacations, or celebrations together. We met, as an extended family almost every weekend - such lovely curries and dhansaks we shared! My aunts loved us as though we were their very own- and what joy, to have lavished upon one the doting fondness of one's uncles! My father and mother both worked outside the home but always seemed to find the time for us, whether it was ensuring that we ate dinner together as a family or finding the time and space to sit and work on school homework with us. While the corporate life includes a general move toward 'work-life balance', it is only when one chooses to attend to family, parents or kids needs, and must sacrifice some visibility or advance in the corporate world, that those values impact us. Our upbringing

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makes these choices easy, and the price insignificant. How did we learn this? Not through words, although we were blessed with articulate parents who believed in and followed Dr Spock's theories on an abundance of love, but with their example, their deeds. They will always be my moral compass as I navigate my path through life. I am sure that these values are shared by some Non-Zarathushtis, that many people in the world might think this way. I feel blessed, that Zarathushtis, including my family, seem to share this fundamental set of values.



Sisters Nawaz Merchant and Khursheed Parakh

**In this place may obedience triumph over
disobedience,
Peace over discord,
Generosity over niggardliness,
Reverence over contempt,
The true spoken word over the false spoken word,
And truth over falsehood. (Yasna 60.5)**

THE CHICANO BAWA

Jayant H Gupta

My memory bank is teeming with a lot of data (I wonder how many giga bytes God has provided us). One memory that I fondly recall revolves around my good friend the CHICANO BAWA ! I vividly remember those years in the 50's and 60's in Aamchi Mumbai as if it were yesterday. The evening walks were long and leisurely, usually filled with animated discussions about any and every topic under the sun. Often Firdaus and I walked down 15th Road Khar from my house near the Gymkhana all the way to Juhu Koliwada and back. Sometimes we went up Pali Hill and sometimes down Linking Road. The route was unimportant as we were quite oblivious of the goings on around us. We were so busy arguing and solving the world's problems. On some weekends we would ride the local train to Churchgate and would take in a movie at the Eros or Regal theatre.....

Ah well, those good old days back "home". Firdaus Pheroze Jhabvala (photo right), was born in 1946 in Bombay of a solid pedigree. His dad owned a printing press somewhere in the Gowalia Tank area of South Bombay. Firdaus's uncle was Cyrus Jhabvala, an architect based in New Delhi and was the husband of New York based Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, the renowned novelist and screenplay writer of Merchant-Ivory films.

Firdaus and I were classmates at the Sacred Heart Boys' High School in Santa Cruz. We both lived in Khar and we have been close friends since the 50's. The friendship continues today though I live in the US and he lives in Mexico.

Firdaus was affectionately called Phaeedoo by his folks at home. There was mom, dad, two brothers and his grandfather -- who traveled to Churchgate by the local train at age 90+, riding with the train driver in front ! The most resourceful figure at home seemed to be "Lawrence" the designated cook. Then there were numerous pet dogs that seemed to be all over the place.

Firdaus was a good swimmer and swam the Butterfly stroke (dolphin style), representing Maharashtra State. Many a day he took the BEST bus to the Mahatma Gandhi pool in Shivaji Park for practice.

Highly opinionated, Firdaus has always been a very bright and intelligent student. He topped the class in high school, went on to Sydenham College and topped B.Com in 1966 in Bombay University. Later he came to the US and did his Master's & Ph.D in Economics from U.Penn in Philadelphia. He then went into academics and did teaching stints in Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Boston and Los Angeles.

Firdaus seemed disillusioned with the typical western bourgeoisie way of life. In 1974 he took up a teaching position at the University in Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico and never left the place since then. He



Oral History

became an economics consultant to the local government, got married and settled down. Firdaus has had a very successful professional career and has many publications to his credit. Firdaus is fond of music and spends time hitting the piano --- something

he was reluctant to do as a child but his mother made him do anyway. Today he finds the piano relaxing.

Firdaus visited me in the late 90s with his Mexican wife and his three kids at our home in Princeton Junction, NJ. It was great to see him again after a quarter of a century. Still the same guy, a bit mellow from outside (thanks to the grey hair) but fiery from within with strong convictions. I am looking forward to the day when I can visit him in Mexico.

Firdaus is now a full Mexican. But I suspect he is also the perennial Bawa. I think he is still fond of his old homeland, although both his brothers now live in the US. Firdaus still goes back to the old country for visits once in a while. Maybe someday he and I can take that walk down 15th road again or ride the train to Churchgate, just for old time's sake.



Jayant Gupta has a degree in Chemical Engineering from IIT Delhi and an MBA from Rutgers University, NJ. He came to the US in 1978 & has held

engineering related positions in the chemical, pharmaceutical & petroleum industries. Currently he is the Engineering Manager at a large US petroleum refinery and resides with his wife near Chicago. They have a daughter who is studying for a Masters Degree in Boston U.

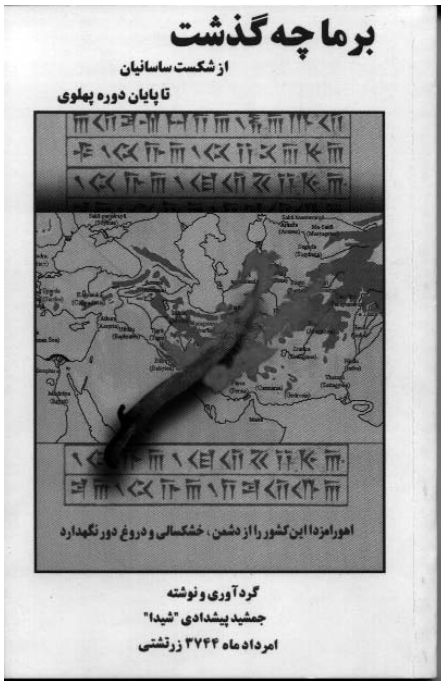
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What Happened to US

by Mr. Jamshid Pishdadi

This recent book by Mr. Jamshid Pishdadi is a must read for not only Zarathushtis but for every single individual

who wants to know about the history of a noble people who once ruled a vast empire of the ancient world. From Cyrus the great and his declaration of human rights, in an era of barbarism, as the foundation of modern man's liberty and justice, to the assassination of king Yazdgerd III



and the demise of the Persian empire, this noble people, the Persians and the nation they built, Pars, and nations they conquered and applied the rules of law, had never imagined such a downfall in the hands of some barbaric people.

The book is now part of a great initiative under the leadership of FEZANA to keep the memories, of our ancestors who gave their lives to keep our ancient flames of wisdom alive so we can remain Zarathushtis. This initiative under the title of "Oral History" interviews our elders by our younger generations and records their recollection of the savagery and cruelty that were told to our elders, from generation to generation and through the ashes of centuries, dating back to about 1400 years when the Persian lands were attacked by Arab Moslems in the name of their God. California Zoroastrian Center and its educational group "Amoozesh" is part of this initiative and my kudas goes to both FEZANA, the Journal, and its leadership and the Amoozesh group for their dedication to further the cause.

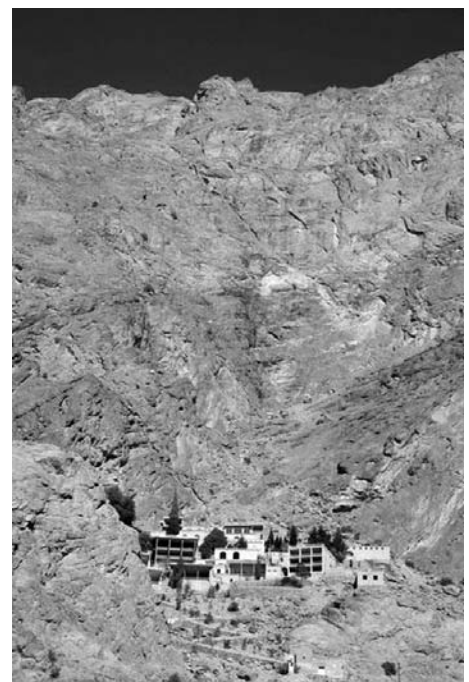
Mr. Pishdadi's book is in an easy to read format in Farsi language. Efforts to translate it into English and other languages would be a worthy cause. The book is a collection of historical writings with accurate references to the page level about the cruel events that were savagely imposed on our ancestors and their offsprings in their own homeland by Arab invaders and their off spring. Right from the start it groups our ancestors in 5 categories.

1. *Those who gave their lives but did not give up their belief.*

2. *Those who migrated to India and kept the flame alive and well over centuries.*
3. *Those who remained in the homeland and paid the price of being Zarathushtis and suffered the consequences of worst living conditions.*
4. *Those who could not handle it anymore and due to unbearable pressure gradually but reluctantly changed and more accurately pretended to have changed their faith, but behind closed doors, in the privacy and security of their homes, families and friends kept the flame alive and passed the Zarathushti traditions from generations to generations. There are millions of such people in Iran who want to go back to their roots. There are millions more among Tajiks, Afghans, Uzbeks, Kurds, Izadis, Druses and other minorities scattered around the world and mostly in Middle East.*
5. *And those of our own ancestors who betrayed us by changing their faith, which based on the freedom of choice in our faith, they are free to do so, but they betrayed us by the worst possible atrocity, provoking and encouraging the Moslem rulers to force Zarathushtis to convert or kill them through mass murder just to justify their own conversion &/or keep their social status &/or obtain positions of power and wealth.*

The book is full of the historical events of mostly the 5th category with proper evidence and valid references during the era between the fall of the Sassanid to the fall of Pahlavis. It gives credit where credit is due to individuals,

Zarathushtis and Moslem alike and to some rulers and even dynasties who tried to help our Zarathushti ancestors for a better living conditions and to avoid mass murder of Zarathushtis and blood shed in any possible way they could. It praises the late Manekji Limjee Hatara in



several places in the book and rightfully refers to him as the savior of Persian Zarathushtis. A claim that is very much valid and appropriate. In between sections and interleaved in the entire book, Mr. Pishdadi has inserted appropriate poems, some of his own and some of others.

At the beginning of the book, we see the resistance of Persians in all parts of the land mostly through self-defense and in some areas through attacks. We read in many places the deceit, and lies of defeated Arab rulers who cheated Persians through promises that they broke as soon as they got access to what they wanted. And the defeated ones became the victors through the goodness of heart and trust that Persians are noted for.

Over the centuries the large resistance is gradually transformed to local resistance and eventually it transforms into non-violence in the shape and forms of literature, especially poetry. Great poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Molana, Khayam and others are truly the manifest of this form of resistance. There are several references in pages of the book to this kind of resistance.

The book towards the end, describes the talent of our ancestors, when given a tiny chance and opportunity can become a major force in science, technology and business due to their integrity, honesty and hard work. This situation which was manifested mostly in the last century was not just isolated to our own homeland and to the Zarathushtis within Iran. The best example of this situation is the families of our Parsi friends who have been the pillar of the largest democracy on earth for centuries.

The book is not very strong in the theology and the scientific and academic view of our faith &/or analysis of the causes of these atrocities. In one estimate, there were several million Zarathushtis at the beginning of Safavid dynasty who were reduced to a few thousands by the end according to the observation made by Marco Polo. And we really do not need another scientific and academic work in this area. What we need is an easy to read, simple writing that tells us what happened to us based on documented facts and historical evidence. And this is what Mr. Pishdadi has done. For the sake of not just knowing what happened but to appreciate what we have, I highly recommend to read this book and make sure your children know about it and read it too as soon as an English translation is out.



Dr. Khosro E. Mehrfar was born in Tehran, Iran. He moved to U.S. in 1979 to pursue his higher education. Dr. Mehrfar has served the Zarathushti community in many capacities. He lives in Southern California with his wife and two children.

DIALOGUE WITH GRANDPARENTS IN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Annahita Jasavala

(right first) has taught Sunday school since 1995 to the children of the Zoroastrian Association of Northern California. When not busy with the monthly Sunday school classes, she is a mural artist and mom. Annahita resides in Modesto California with her husband Jehangir and daughters Rohini and Navaz.

She organized the children as young as 5 years, of the Sunday school to talk to their parents and grandparents about their lives as young people.

Mandana Pishdadi *(right second)* was born in Tehran, Iran to Mr. Jamshid Pishdadi and Mrs. Farangis Jehanian Parsi. After the revolution in Iran she came to the United States to continue her education. She has a B.S. degree in Mathematics and Computer Science and has worked in several electronic companies. She is currently employed as a principal engineer in one of the semiconductor companies in Southern California. She is married to Mr. Parviz Mazdiyasnani and has two sons by the name of Omid and Arman.

She has always been an active member of Zarathushti community. and served as a member of Zarathushti Youth committee of San Jose, CA when she lived there and has been active member of Amoozesh Group of Southern California Zoroastrian Center for over 10 years. In this position, she has been helping provide Farsi and Avesta classes to the youth in her community and organize programs for major celebrations like Naurooz and Mehregan. She has also been co-teaching the teen class in the CZC center. In this position, she has helped teenagers learn about the Zarathushti religion, customs and values through community projects.

Last year the teen class raised \$900.00 through three fundraising projects. The funds were then donated to two causes in Iran. The class also had other projects that they participated in one of which was the "Oral History" project.

I would like to thank FEZANA for providing this opportunity for our youth to learn about their elders and start dialog with their grandparents.



Sarosh J. Sopariwalla, N. California, Aged- 6 years. Talks to his grandparents Adi and Jeroo Cooper

Sarosh : What language did you speak in the house?

Grandparents : Gujarati.

Sarosh: Were you worried for yourr safety?

Grandparents: (There were) no attacks in Bombay.

Sarosh: How did you go to school?

Grandparents: Walking with our legs.

Sarosh: Did you have enough to eat?

Grandparents . Yes, we had lots to eat.



Traditional Jhablas (hand embroidered shirts worn by little boys and girls)

Siblings in Jhablas circa early 1910
photo courtesy Armaity and Framroze Patel



Tishtar Daruwalla (8 years) talks to her Dad Kersi Daruwalla



My Dad went to school by bus, car, and walking. He got his food from his Mum and Dad and celebrated birthdays by talking a bath and having new clothes. Granny did "Sagan – ni – tili", then went to Agiary and

then to school. My dad did not go to any gahambars. (On NauRooz, my Dad went for a bath, then (to) the Agiary and then he visited friends and family and rested in the afternoon, and went to the movies in the evening. My dad spoke Gujarati and English. He had chores to do such as, shop for eggs, bread and vegetables. He had no computers, but played hide-and-seek, cricket, and 7 tiles.

My Dad's city was very, very, very crowded. There was one war – Indo-Pakistan war. Food was rationed and they put black paper on the windows for the black-outs. They had enough to eat, but food was scarce. They were worried for their safety because there was a lot of bombing.

My grandparents did not move to the United States or Canada. We continued our family culture by practicing our religion like doing the "Divo" in the house, learning and saying prayers, and mixing with people of our religion. Today they have to do everything themselves like housework, office jobs, and driving us around

Homai,(1907) Rustom (1909) and Khorshed (1910) older siblings of the father of Armaity
Framroze Patel (New York)



Jamsheed Mistri, (5 years) of Mountain View, California talks to his Grandfather Ervad Jal Birdy (70 years), Corona California. (With a little help from his mother Meher Mistri.)

Oral History



Jamsheed : What were your parents' names?

Grandfather Jal: A: My father was Nariman Cowasji Birdy, my mother was Najamai Birdy (nee Avasia).

Jamsheed : What school did you go to?

Grandfather Jal : I spent my first 6 years in the J.N. Tata Parsi Girls High school in Nagpur, which allowed Parsi boys up to the age of about 11. The next five years were spent in the Saint Frances de Sales Boys High School in Nagpur.

Jamsheed How did you get to school.

Grandfather Jal : For J. N. Tata School – I walked. For the S.F.S. School – I used my uncle's Bicycle which was converted for me because I could not reach the pedals.

Jamsheed: How did you get your lunch at school?

Grandfather Jal: Our servants brought our lunch to school in a "tiffin" carrier.

Jamsheed: How did you celebrate Naurooz? Birthdays?

Grandfather Jal We woke up early in the morning, bathed and went to the Agiary to pray. Returned home and visited all our neighbors who kept their tables filled with lovely treats. The school was closed on Navroze. In the evening we usually went to a film or a Parsi Natak.

Jamsheed : Did you have chores? What were they?

Grandfather Jal: Keeping my desk clean and my books in order, washing my dishes, cooking my breakfast, polishing my shoes, getting groceries from the market sometimes. Helping my grandma and aunt with their housework.

Jamsheed : What games did you play and with whom? What hobbies did you have?

Grandfather Jal: Cricket, tennis, marbles, packets, volleyball, badminton, Hobbies – making models and movies.

Jamsheed : What was a typical weekday like? Weekend?

Grandfather Jal: Going to school, physical training, singing monajats (devotional songs) in the morning, playing during school breaks. (On)

weekends – homework, more games, swimming and movies.

Jamsheed : How did you see your future? What were your dreams?

Grandfather Jal : I knew I would have to work hard if I was going to get anywhere. I wanted to become an engineer.

Jamsheed : What are the two best memories of your youth?

Grandfather Jal: I enjoyed my school and college days. I enjoyed musical movies of that time.

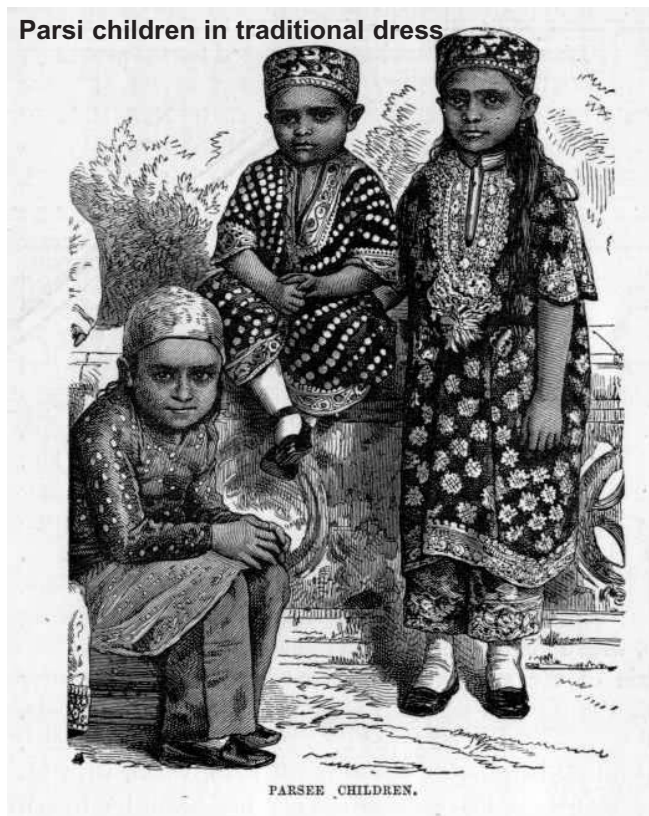
Jamsheed : Describe your city.

Grandfather Jal Nagpur was the capital of the Central Provinces, later named Madhya Pradesh. Now it is part of Maharashtra. It is a relatively small city, famous for its oranges and cotton.

Jamsheed : Why did you move to America?

Grandfather Jal I was very keen on getting an education abroad. I was awarded the Tata Endowment Scholarship and other scholarships to study in London. It was a chance of a lifetime.

Parsi children in traditional dress



Oral History

On Sunday June 10, 2007 the California Zoroastrian Center (CZC) teen class hosted 20 of our grandparents to participate in the "Oral History" project. We grouped 3 teens and 4 grandparents and had list of questions that was discussed. The teens then wrote articles on their reflection.

The CZC teen class is comprised of 21 teens between ages of 13 and 17 years. We learn about our religion and Ashu Zarthust's philosophy and participate in number of projects. The goal of our projects is to make the teens familiar with Zarathushti culture, help gather other z-youth together and raise funds to help families in need.

The "Oral history" project helped teens learn about their grandparent's lives and opened a dialog between them and older generation. Following articles are written by these teens and reflect what they have learned from this project. **Mandana Pishdadi**



Aryana Behmardian – 13 years old

Last week, some of our grandparents came and talked to us about when they were kids. I knew their lifestyle would be different than ours, but I was surprised to find that it was more different than I could ever have imagined. They told us stories about where they lived, what they did at school, how they celebrated Zarathushti ceremonies, and so much more. As I sat there and listened to the tales of their youth, I realized that I was pretty much taking advantage of everything I have. They barely had anything and they were happy.

I finally understood how hard life was back then, and how much people were bullied because of their religion. It makes me so thankful to have what

they didn't have, freedom of religion. I mean, they had it, but they were persecuted so much because of what they believed in. At one point I just wanted to stand up and say, "Why didn't you fight back, why didn't you make fun of them." But I figured out that answer all on my own, because there were too many Muslims. Zarathushtis were the minority people in Iran back then, and still are today.

Kids back then didn't have an easy life as they do now. They had to walk to school, do almost all the chores, do all their homework, and countless other tasks. Even though they had so many things to accomplish, they were happy. Some people today, with all this technology and free time are still not happy.

The most important thing I learned from this experience was how much they cared and how proud they were of their religion. Because of all the bullying they got from everyone else around them, they could have easily converted, but knowing that their grandchildren would keep their religion alive, they didn't.



Aryana Behmardian facing between two grandmothers

Neda Oshideri – 13 years old

The difference between the life of our grandparents and our life is amazing! The way they ate, learned, did chores, did homework, time they slept, and even celebrated parties! Their school life was very different from even each other depending if they were just a bit older or younger. Some had the strictest teachers, and they wore uniforms. If they broke a rule they would get detention with the scariest teachers.

Yet others had the best school life! The teachers were nice and they got to wear whatever they wanted. Also the hours they went to school were different from us! They went to school from morning until the afternoon, went home until about 2:00 p.m. then went back to school until 4:00 p.m.. Their classes were also grouped in the level of their students' grades. 20 was like 100%, so there was a number one student in each class and then the rest of them (19 and below). They also got prizes for being number one in their class.

Their way of celebrating parties was very different. People were closer to each other and they knew each other more. Now we're



Counter clock wise teens Neda Oshideri, Shiva Amanat an Payam Goshtasbi

separated and spread out, some kids these days barely know their own relatives! They got together with everyone every holiday, and they celebrated! They had a holiday when the name of a day and the month is the same, they had a gahanbar on those days.

They also learned about their own religion differently! Some had to go to special classes to learn about their religion, or their parents just taught them some basic points. Also their sedreh-pushhi depended on how much money they had. If they were wealthy they would have a big party in their mabad, but if they were poor, they would hold it in their house and only family members were allowed. Some don't even know about some things that we know now. Also it was very hard for them to be Zarathushtis in a Muslim community. They had to learn about the Muslim religion in school, and learn to speak Arabic combining with learning about Zarathushtrian religion and learning the old Persian language. The students got confused.

This is a little bit of why our grandparents' lives were different from ours when they were our age. They have so much to tell us, but we usually don't ask or care. So next time you see your grandparents ask them about their life and ponder how different it is from ours. You'll be amazed to know about the differences between you and your grandparents.

Payam Goshtasbi – 17 years old

I would like to start by thanking FEZANA JOURNAL for letting me be part of this one of a life time experience.

As I was sitting there, listening to the elderly talk about their past and how times were back in Iran, I realized something that I had never thought of before. I noticed that in the past, everyone in their extended families got along and were always with each other. Compar this to our generation, I personally have cousins and uncles that I've seen maybe once in my life. And when we do get a chance to see each other, it is awkward and it's like the people in front of you are from another planet. Another thing that I noticed was that back in those days, people were easily amused and didn't depend on their iPods or computers for entertainment, but rather entertained themselves by building memories and lifelong bonds with each other as well. I realize now that how technology is taking us to new levels of communication, devices and gadgets but at the same time is depriving us of what really matter to us: our family.

Another thing that I noticed was that for the elderly, each one of their memories had so much emotion for them. And they would sometimes even ask each other if they remembered that particular memory or not so that they could share their individual memories. For us teenagers their memories were just stories, but for them, those memories were a lifetime of hardships, sacrifices and enjoyment.

In conclusion, I think that this generation has dropped the torch that has been passed down from generation to generation. I believe that it is our duty to connect with our elderly and bridge the gap that has been formed. We should not leave this problem unattended because if our generation does nothing, then as we grow up and slowly blend more and more into the American culture, we will slowly lose our own culture and where we come from and the struggles that our ancestors went through to not only keep our Zarathushti religion alive, but our Persian culture as well.



1946 wedding of Homayun and Jamshid Soroushian (Photo courtesy Mehrborzin Soroushian)

Shiva Amanat – 13 years old

I learned many things from interviewing the grandparents. Things such as, their life at home and their life at school. The way the grandparents grew-up was much more different than the way we grow-up today. They had to do many things by hand while we have technology to do our work for us.

Schooling for them was somewhat different than the way we are schooled today. Back when the grandparents were in school, there was no such thing as "Open House" or "Back to School Night." Now days, parents are invited to our school to see what we have been working on throughout the year. Also, back then, if the students got in trouble or did a wrong-doing, their punishment would be a whack on the hand with a ruler or being pulled on the ear. Today, teachers are not allowed to hurt the students in any way. Instead, the students either get a warning, detention, or get sent to the principle's office, where the principle gets to decide what their punishment is.

I also learned a bit about their religion. Back then, if you would want to get Sedreh-Pushhi done, there was a certain way you would have to. If you were rich, you would have a big party with a gathering of people watching you get sedreh-pushhi. And if you were poor, you would have it in your own house with just your family. It was also difficult back then, knowing that everyone around them was Muslim. Many of the parents told their children not to walk alone. One of the celebrations the Zarathushti's had was Piroon. Piroon was a time when all the Zarathushti's got together to talk and just have a little time to themselves, away from the Muslims.



Sedreh –pushhi of Viraf and Vishtasp Soroushian in Vancouver. Performed by Mobed Mehraban Zarthoshty and Mobed Jehangir Panthaky (Photo courtesy Mehrborzin Soroushian)

Overall, interviewing the grandparents was an experience I learned a lot from. It was something interesting to listen to and compare how we do things today with how others did it back then. Just sitting there and listening to their answers made you say "wow" inside your head. For me, interviewing the grandparents was a great experience.

Arman Mazdiyasni – 15 years old

Last week a couple grandparents came from different families to talk to us about their lives when they were children. I learned about how they lived in Iran when they did not have the technology that we have today. I learned that because of the lack of technology, people in Iran played outside all the time and made friends, instead of sitting home and watching T.V. because they did not have one. This is the reason that most of the people knew everyone in their neighborhood, while today we only know a few of our neighbors. They are also a lot closer to their family members than we are because they all lived in the same general area while today we have family members spread out across the world.

The grandparents had to make up for the things they didn't have by making them on their own. For example some of the grandparents took a goats stomach and filled it with hay and played soccer with it. Others spent their time playing games that did not require a ball such as tag. Even though the grandparents had none of the material things that we have today, they were happy. With all this technology today we still get bored, but back then the grandparents had each other, but they never got bored.

I also learned that Zarthoshti's in different parts of the country were treated differently. Some of the grandparents told me that they were not discriminated at all, while others told me that they were not given all of their rights because of their religion. I learned that in some places Zarthoshti's were not allowed to touch foods because they were thought of as dirty. Others were not allowed to go the school they wanted because they were non-Muslims. *I am glad I talked to the different grandparents because I learned that I should appreciate the things I have and how lucky I am to not have to give up my rights just because of my beliefs.*

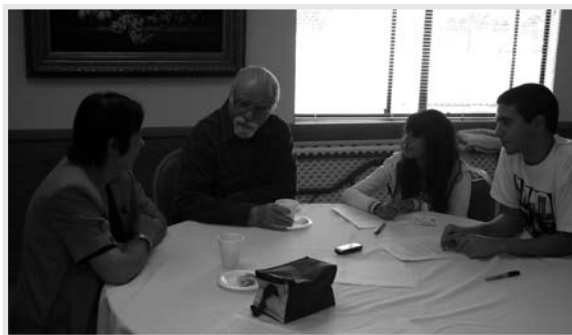
Nusheen Goshtasbi – 13 years old

I learned many things from the Oral History Project. I learned a lot about what happened before my generation and how life differs from today. One thing that stood out to me during this project was, how much more time people spent with their families and each other than today. Each person I interviewed mentioned a lot about time spent with their families, relatives, and neighbors. They said during the summer they'd go to their cousin's houses and played everyday with neighbors. I rarely see my cousins or neighbors. Life seemed like it was based around the community and everyone would help one another and they all were kind towards each other. Today everyone is mostly on their own. They don't need anyone's help.

Another topic that stood out to me was punishment. Children were punished a lot more than today! If a student broke a rule, did something wrong, or did badly on a test, they would be punished for it. This wasn't a nice punishment; they'd be either hit with a stick or ruler. Today you would never see some teacher beating a child with a ruler because they didn't do well on a test. Punishments kept the children scared, so they all would do their work and not bother the teacher. Today school isn't based on fear at all; who cares if you don't do well on a test it won't hurt you.

I also realized that life was more difficult. Children were expected to do daily chores and the parents did the rest. They washed their clothes by hand with water and soap. There was no plumbing so you had to go to a well everyday to get water for the day. There wasn't television or telephone. Everyone walked place to place because almost no one owned a car at the time. This made everyday life so much more difficult than today. Just think today...what would you do without your car? Without a phone? Without a television? Life wouldn't be as we know it without all this technology.

Overall the Oral History Project has opened my eyes to different ways of life. It has taught me that we have come far today. It has showed me that life wasn't always easy.



Nusheen Goshtasbi, and Arman Mazdiyasni in white shirt

Shereen Afshari – 13 years old

I've learned that now a days we are happy because of material things. In Iran people were happy for living not for material things. It contributed greatly to how society is now and how much we've changed. Technology has changed us good and bad. It helps us communicate with the outside world but it takes away from us truly being happy. In Iran people didn't have any of this stuff while growing up and they were fine with that if you took our ipods and cell phones and computers away we would have nothing to do. We would sit in our room and fight with our parents to give us our stuff back.



Shereen Afshari centre front table

Technology has changed us good and bad. It has helped us get more involved and learn more about the outside world. But technology has taken away from the stuff that make us who we are. Instead of going outside and playing, all that the kids want to do is stay at home and watch TV and go on the computer. In Iran the kids didn't have computer and some still don't; all the kids go outside and play.

Without technology I think our era would be completely different. I think we would be more involved and care more about the little things in life. But we wouldn't really know what would be going on with our world. I think if we had less technology we would help out more with the family and go play more and our kids would be completely different because they would be extremely involved.

Roya Behmardian – 14 years old

Having nothing, but enjoying everything is one of the gimmicks that comes along with living a simple life. With no real pens to do homework, no elegant vacations to go on, and no play station 2's to keep them busy. Various grandparents cherish their past as if it was perfect. When I say perfect, I don't mean living in a 4 story mansion with fame and glory. No, this perfect is entirely different. It's the kind of perfect that one comes across when he is with his friends, just playing around, knowing that a materialistic life does not bring true happiness.



Time after time, I'm reminded that the purpose of life is to improve humanity. Learning about the old days, I wonder, if we live in an improved world with better resources, why isn't the quality of our happiness increasing? Why is it that grandparents who lived without Disney Channel, can say they had a fun childhood while we practically die of boredom when there's a blackout? Not only that, but why is it that people like my grandfather play with sticks and stones like it was a toy, and I sit here typing this on a computer with access to online games, and for some reason don't find that appealing. Enjoyment can be accessed in any generation; however, it is up to the people to decide how they're going to take pleasure in it. With religious pressure from peers and grown ups, Zarathushti grandparents have also felt prejudice against their beliefs, and had to hide their faith just to fit in. Their effort to preserve our religion is one of the reasons why they were so grateful for what they achieved, and that is keeping our religion alive. We don't force our ideology upon anyone, but we should be proud of what has been passed on to us and find new ways to pass it to future generations.

Hilda Kasravi – 13 years old

On Sunday June 10th, 2007 for the first time I got to talk to a few older grandparents about their childhood and about their experience growing up in a different generation than ours. Although, they might have not had too many technologies during their childhood they sure seemed to be very happy with the few little things they did have. They might have been treated wrong because of their religion, worked hard, or had gone through a difficult childhood, but they were all fortunate and happy with what they had and made the best of it. (In photo Hilda Kasravi facing in glasses)

Thinking of all the things we have right now and always wanting more, we never really appreciate the things we have. This is the opposite of them; they would always play with their toys until they were worn out or wear their clothes until they were too small. I learned a lot about how our grandparents have lived their childhood and gone through all the difficulties in their society, but the one thing that I think they should be awarded for is their strong courage to stand up for their religion. Being a Zartoshti was not very easy at that time. People would hurt you, not treat you like others, and take advantage of you. Also, I learned that their normal tradition and ceremonies were a lot like ours instead more people would attend.



I really enjoyed learning about our grandparents' childhood and how they grew up. This interview was a very interesting and educational project that we got to work on and I was very glad we got to do this. After listening to all the grandparents, I really thought about our generation and how we look at things differently from them. This interview has taught me to be very thankful to be growing up in such a wonderful generation full of technology and education. Even though they were less educated than us, a lot less wealthy than us, had less things than we do, they were happy with what they had. Learning to respect my surroundings and what I have are things I learnt during the interview. **I thank FEZANA for coming up with this idea and all the grand parents who have told us about their childhood experience. Thank you!**

My Impressions of Parsis while traveling in India

My Maasi Firoza Bhot

By **Avan Antia** (Age 13)
By **Aanika Lal** (Age 14)

When I was given this assignment to write my impressions of the Parsis of India, I thought to myself, don't I already know what Parsis are like? I mean, aren't they just like everyone else? Well, after my trip to India, I was proven absolutely wrong! The Parsis I met, including my family, were so different than what I thought. They were helpful, respectful, generous, self-sufficient, kind and trustworthy. But don't get me wrong, not only the Parsis were so humble and sweet, many other people of different races and ethnic groups were also like this, but the way the Parsis demonstrated these character traits, stood out like a peacock in a room of snakes.

One example of how the Parsis showed this was by helping others. One day as I was visiting the Atash-Behram with my family, my grandma told me how her father used to help less fortunate people by paying some of their tuition fees, ration food money and doctor bills. She also told me how my grandpa's dad used to take all the children in his compound out for an educational trip like the Mint, the Ballad Pier and the Quality Ice-cream Factory. Although I actually do not know my great grandparents, I knew they were truly

amazing and very generous people by the stories I heard about them.

The Parsis I met and heard about were very efficient. At the same time as they were helping others they were helping themselves. A few days ago, when we were driving, I spotted a sign that read, "The Parsi Ladies Coop. Institute, Ltd". Then I asked my mom what it was and she explained it to me. She said that it was an organization of less fortunate Parsi ladies who came to cook food and bake goodies to sell and make money. In other words they aren't fortunate to have a job, so they cook together to make a living. This truly shows how self-sufficient the Parsis are.

Although it sounds like they live a boring life and are always working and helping others, it isn't true. Parsis people are very fun loving. When I went bowling with my cousin and my Fui, (father's sister) I had a BLAST! My Fui was so generous and let us, my brother, my cousin and myself, play so many games at the arcade. And of course, we thanked her after the absolutely brilliant day we had spent together, which included dinner at a Chinese restaurant.

When I was asked to do this interview the first thing that came to my head was "how can I do a Zarathushti oral history project when I'm not even a Zarathushti"? But I was completely wrong. By doing this interview, I feel so much closer to my mother, who is a Parsi, and I feel so much wiser. My mom and I can now talk and relate to the matters that I discussed in the interview. This interview has given me a lot more than just knowledge.

My maasi, (mother's sister) Firoza Bhot, and I are very close. She is my role model and like my second mother. I knew that if interviewed her I would get the perfect response. She was more than willing to do the



Aanika Lal is 14 Years old and going to be a freshman in high school (9th Grade) this September. After college, she plans to have a career in law. Her interests are tennis, dancing, singing, running track and field, and swimming.

interview with me and gave up a huge amount of her time. When conducting this interview I could hear a tremble in her voice. My maasi takes her religion very seriously. While talking about the Zarathushti religion she knows exactly what she is talking about. Certain questions that I asked my maasi also related to me. For example when I asked how she keeps in touch with loved ones in the US and from those types of questions I found out things about my maasi/best friend/ that I had never known before. Doing this interview has made my maasi and me even closer than we were before. Living so far away from each other never kept us apart and so it did not interfere with the interview either.

To have this interview, due to the time change, it had to be 1:30 am in America and 10:30 am in India. I did not even have to worry about falling asleep, as I was so excited to have the interview. All night I kept practicing the questions on my mom, asking her whether they were relevant or whether they were good enough. Every five minutes waking her up to ask whether I was pronouncing something right or not. And when the time finally came to call in for the interview, I was completely ready.

While doing the interview, I had to stop a couple times to actually digest the information that my maasi was giving me as it was so deep and there was so much said in just one sentence. The way that she described how youngsters now should preserve the culture that people have been respecting for centuries together, moved me. I always knew that everyday when my mom and maasi wake-up they take a shower and do their Kusti prayers every single day. But I never knew how much it meant to them until the interview. I don't think that I can ever forget what this interview has done for me. And next time I am ever asked to do something like this, I will never even think about the fact that I can't because I am not of that culture or that I don't know a lot about the subject because by actually doing this, you learn more then you realize, from both sides. The interviewer learns about the interviewee and visa-versa. It is a very touching matter and I will never forget it. I will always be thankful for the opportunity that I was given.



Oral History

The Parsis I met, were also very religious. They went to the Atash-Behram and Agaries quite frequently. Every morning and night they did their kusti

payers. I have experienced so much on my trip to India and I enjoyed a whole lot too. I didn't have such a strong impression about Parsis before I met so many of them. I think the Parsi people are fantastic!

Avan Antia will be starting 8th grade in North Potomac, Maryland. She wants to grow up to be an actress and work with animals. She is interested in arts and crafts, nature, and science. Her two heroes are her brilliant parents who always guide her in the right direction every time, to help her accomplish her goals. But, one thing she also loves and is interested in is of course, her spectacular religion and culture!

Interview with Roda and Savak Merchant

Ashish Mirji (15)

Oral History

When I found out I had an opportunity to interview Mr. and Mrs. Merchant I was very excited and was eager to find out more about this. I had never interviewed someone before. At first when I was interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Merchant I felt a little strange doing that but as we kept going I got the hang of it. I did this interview because I wanted to try this and I got a lot of help from Mrs. Nawaz Merchant and my mom Percis Daruwala.

Mr. and Mrs. Merchant were very nice people and they were ready to help do this interview. Their experiences taught me a lot about life. I learned a lot about their youth and the people who influenced them and as they grew older and how they changed. As they related their experiences, I began to see how events in their lives have affected them, and how their positive attitudes helped them overcome difficulties. I also learned a lot about how Parsees were treated under the British rule and their views about the Zarathushti Deen.

One of the interesting things they told me was when I asked them what they thought about wearing the sudreh and kushti and that now days kids do not wear it. They said that they would wear the sudreh and kushti every day no matter what, and that kids these days should take it more seriously. Being devoted Zarathushstis, they enthusiastically described the importance of the sudreh and the kushti. It became clear to me that their faith is a cornerstone of their identity.

When I enquired about their childhood, Mrs. Merchant said her parents were more strict than others

but she still had fun with her friends. She recalled a very pleasant, enjoyable childhood, despite, as she recalled, her family was not well-off and had to do without many things. In contrast, she described how the freedom the kids have these days is vastly different than what she had. Her world was very limited, and she did not even know of things outside a suburb of Bombay.

Mr. Merchant had an enjoyable but very hard working youth. He had to leave college when instructed by his father, in order to bring in an income, so that his other siblings might study further. He did as asked, but felt this lack of a master's degree constrained his career as it progressed through the years. Obedience to the parents, he thought, was the fundamental difference between his generation and next. His generation did not question or oppose their parents, even in a decision that they objected to. The younger generation (at present), insists upon using their own reason, and making their own decisions. Ultimately, he was reconciled to the sacrifice he made for his family, and glad that he could aid them at this critical time and help them gain good careers.

Mr. and Mrs. Merchant were very young during the time of war and didn't understand much of what was going on. They spoke about the profits earned by many companies during the second world war and the pressures of work production, rationing of food, and scarcity of

things like electricity and they used to cook food the old fashion way involving gas stoves and they would walk or bike there way to travel.

As the interview progressed, Mr. and Mrs. Merchant reminded me of my grandparents because they are so nice and they too had a hard working life. When they were telling me about it, I noticed many similarities to anecdotes and phrases from my grandparents. And another thing was clear - their love for each other was visible in the way they talk to each other and how they care about each other. This interview made me think a lot – Among other things, I learned that early choices in your life determine what you are going to be in the future and I think that is very important.



Ashish Mirji, 15 Years old, a junior (11th Grade) lives in New Jersey with his parents who each run their own business. After college, he plans to have a career in technology and computer software. His interests are ROTC activities, games, music, hiking, swimming and canoeing.

Piloo and Hoshang Khambatta interviewed by Tina Dukandar (Age 14)

My name is Tina Dukandar and on July 15, 2007, I interviewed Kayomarz Khambatta's parents, Piloo Aunty and Hoshang Uncle. Hoshang Uncle grew up in Pune and Piloo Aunty grew up in Bombay. "My favorite memory was everyday going out and playing with my friends," said Hoshang Uncle recalling fond memories of his childhood. The difference is those days they used to go out and play more with their friends than what we do now-a-days. They liked to play cricket and other outdoor sports.

On asking about how they met, Piloo Aunty mentioned that she met Hoshang Uncle through her brother. I asked Hoshang Uncle, what does being a Parsi mean to him? He replied confidently that to be a Parsi (Zarthushti) means a person who follows the path of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. Prayer was considered an integral part of the culture.

As similar as our lives may seem, Piloo aunty and Hoshang uncle were part of a landmark event of Indian history unlike anything that us kids have ever witnessed. On the subject of pre-Independence era, Hoshang Uncle said that the partition did not affect the Parsi community, although it altered the lifestyle of many Indian citizens. Hoshang Uncle went on to say that life under the British rule was better relative to the period immediately after independence. Since Parsis were favored under the British rule, I was curious to know whether they faced any discrimination after the British left. Piloo aunty replied that they were not faced with any discrimination. The main reason why Hoshang uncle and Piloo aunty left India for America was to join their son's family and be with their grandchildren Poruz and Karl Khambatta. In the beginning, they did miss India, but as time went on they started liking this country.

Recounting her days back in India, Piloo Aunty told me about how she would celebrate the traditional customs and rituals. The NauRoos Day started bright and early with a family trip to the fire temple. To enjoy in the evening, Piloo Aunty would go to the Gateway of India with friends and family. And just like any good celebration, the day was topped off with a traditional, yet delectable dinner of Pulao and Dal.

The biggest difference between India and America, says Hoshang Uncle is that "there is no proper fire temple where we can go pray and offer special prayers on an auspicious day." Whether it is the Muktaad Prayers, NauRoos, or just an ordinary day, the Khambatta's favorite tradition is simply prayer.

This interview with Hoshang Uncle and Piloo Aunty was truly an honor and joy. They were very informative by giving me insight into their lives from India all the way to the US. Hoshang Uncle and Piloo Aunty are all around true Parsis, dedicated to their religion and community.



Oral History

I would like to thank Kayomarz Uncle and Goolcher Aunty for giving me the opportunity to interview their parents at their house. I would

also like to thank Karl and Poruz for patiently translating in Gujarati to their grandparents.

Tina Dukandar is an eighth grade student at Edison High School. She enjoys Indian Classical Dancing which she has learned for three years. Her hero is her older sister, who is going into a George Washington University for pre-medicine. Tina's goal is to do well in high school and pursue a career in Medicine.



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Dilmeher Mistry in an interview with Tina Dukandar

I interviewed Dilmeher Mistry who was speaking on behalf of her great grandmother, Meherbanoo. Meherbanoo chose to leave Iran due to the persecution by the local Muslims. They were not well off so had to set sail for India. Her husband died at sea and she had five children. When coming to Mumbai due to very limited resources, she was forced to put all her children in orphanages, Aderbad, Rustom, Goola, Shirine, and Piroja. It was heartbreaking to hear that a mother was put in such a crisis that she had to give up the only great thing in her life, her children. I hoped that the mother would someday be able to reunite with all her children.

In the end, Meherbanoo was reunited with all of her children. Although they grew up in orphanages, they did not let their hardship stand in the way of their success.

One day Adarbad was insulted and realized that to prove everyone wrong about a poor child in an orphanage, he must study and work hard at any cost. During the day, Adarbad worked and would use the little down time he had in the evenings to study outside, underneath public lampposts, due to disturbance around the house and just to be able to concentrate on his studies and help save on electricity at home. He grew up to become a famous Eye Surgeon. Shortly The World War 2 broke and he joined the Army. He was given the title of Major and was a decorated veteran of World War 2. Adarbad used his success to help his mother and siblings by starting up a family business for them so they can work and earn a good living and also helping them with housing and in the education of his nephews and nieces so as to become good and productive citizens of society. True to the Zarathushti Religious belief he was a great philanthropist and helped not only his own family but the community at large. He was a great motivator in the community. This story is very inspiring and showed me that as long as you have the perseverance and will, no goal is too high for you.

I would like to thank Mrs. Dilmeher Mistry for sharing this inspiring story.

(For bio of author see page 66)

A conversation with Hosi Mehta

Whether Zarathushtis like to admit or not, there is a widening separation between the youth and our elder counterparts. Indeed times have changed and so have people, which unfortunately creates a problem for our race. At times youth in general do not wish to listen to senior citizens who have 'been there and done that,' when in hindsight the younger generation has the most to gain. To realize where the Zarathushti community is headed, it is important to talk to someone who has shaped the past before my time.

My one wish in being involved with the Zarathushti Oral History Project was to learn the social and religious differences between myself and my interviewee. As I dialed the number for my first interview with Chicago native Hosi Mehta, I quickly hung up and stared at the phone with a certain uneasiness. I thought to myself, "What would I say to this man who shares nothing in common with me? Would he think I was some rowdy teenager from Las Vegas who gambles in her spare time?"

As I began my interview I felt guilty for ever thinking this man would pass judgment on me because the voice gave away that he was a kind and open minded person. Even before talking with Hosi I had often seen his

name in the FEZANA Journal and now knowing his contributions to our Zarathushti community I am glad his name is always reiterated. Hosi's involvement with FEZANA, ZAC and Zarathushti youth is the cornerstone of this man's passions.

For four years he served as Vice President for ZAC and then four years later he was named President. Hosi also has served on the ZAC Constitution amendment committee in 1990 and 2006. What strikes me even more so is that Hosi still has not forgotten the young leaders of this community. Case in point he has chaired the ZAC Youth Committee and served twice on an executive committee for Youth Congresses hosted in Chicago. Even people outside of the US took notice of Hosi's extensive charity work; in 2004 Hosi won the Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur award from World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce.

With much success in the corners of the Zarathushti community, Hosi is a leader within his hometown of



Oral History

Elmhurst, IL by starting many local youth focused organizations.

Indeed Hosi does have a day job which includes managing his automotive business called Mehta Motors for the last 23 years with his three sons, Shawn, Sheroy and Shazad.

After interviewing Hosi I have learnt that his philosophy in life is kindness and that everyone has the freedom to be the person they wish. "We have to work on perfecting ourselves before we can improve others," said Hosi and this is a certain phrase that has stuck with me since our interview. In retrospect Hosi's message was simple; but could I even judge myself before doing the same to others? Hosi further emphasizes the importance of living our religion on a daily basis and by the end of our hour long conversation I realized I have spoken with a man who has truly lived.

By Farah Minwalla, Nevada

A Migration Story: From Iran to the United States

Nazneen Bahrassa

Oral History

My father Feraydoon Bahrassa grew up in Mobarakeh, a small Zarathushti farming village about 25 miles south of the larger town of Yazd, Iran. He was born in the 1940s and remembers the village as a happy place, reminiscent of its namesake which means a place that brings happiness. At that time, there were about 400 Zarathushtis living in Mobarakeh and a few non-Zarathushti families as well. A strong sense of community defined the village and as he recalls, "Every morning we would see and greet the neighbors coming out from their houses to get the fresh spring water for tea or cooking and cleaning." The villagers would then start on their daily tasks such as tending to their gardens, picking up the produce, or cleaning the house. Most of the time, they would ask each other to help with the tasks that required more work. For example, one family would ask another for help with sowing the seeds or picking fruit off the trees. In particular, the village of Mobarakeh was known for its pomegranate trees. My father estimates, "About 80-85% of the trees in the farms and gardens of the villages were pomegranate." The delicious fruit was ample, but there were also apples, pears, and peaches and various vegetables cultivated in the village.

Oftentimes, the villagers would take their produce to other villages or go to the bigger city of Yazd. Donkeys were the main source of transportation, aside from walking, for most people. Even bicycles were a rarity to see. At the time, the Zoroastrian Anjuman or association was responsible for one bus that transported all villagers, Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis alike, to Yazd every morning. In comparison to Mobarakeh, Yazd was a bigger city with a population of around 25,000 in the early 1950s. It also boasted a fairly large Zarathushti population in comparison to other towns. However, the Zarathushti population was still a minority population. In the public middle school my father attended in Taft, over 95% of the

students were non-Zarathushtis. There was one Zarathushti teacher who taught chemistry and physics classes, but all students were required to attend Islamic religious classes. This led to some difficult experiences for my father as he relates, "It was very hard, very hard. Some of the teachers were so fanatical. I remember one teacher who taught religious education for Muslim students and forced me to attend his class. I had to read all about their religious education and even take an exam for that class. They were so aggressive at trying to convert you." Luckily for him, he had a lot of support from the Zarathushti community and completed his education without encountering further religious oppression.

After finishing his medical studies in Tehran, he looked for opportunities to go abroad given the political situation in Iran at the time. Just before the Iranian revolution in 1979, the country was churning with political unrest. "There were strikes going on everywhere. Most of the offices and places of work were closed. Additionally, there was a curfew instated by the Shah's military to try and help keep things under control. You could not go anywhere. It paralyzed the country." Just before the revolution, my father came to the United States on a visa for a medical conference. He made the decision to stay and pursue his educational and teaching goals by applying and obtaining a fellowship in his area of specialty. "Really I was not involved in any political activities and mainly my concentration was on education, learning, and teaching. I thought the US was the best place for me to live and progress in my education and teaching... I decided not to go back to Iran, because of the uncertainty of whether I could survive in that kind of atmosphere."

As a practicing Zarathushti, one of the most salient differences for my father between the cultures of Iran and the United States was his ability to practice his faith freely. "In spite of not knowing many Zarathushtis in the United States at that time, I was

happy with being able to openly sit, for example, on the balcony of my apartment and pray without any restrictions or problems. You can not do that even now in Iran – to sit on the balcony and pray." A few years after immigrating to the United States, my father married and settled in Louisiana. He currently resides in Little Rock, Arkansas with his family and regularly makes a five and a half hour drive to Dallas, Texas to attend religious functions hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT). Just as when he was a young boy in Yazd, he again enjoys a strong sense of community and looks forward to promoting unity within the faith in the future.



Nazneen Bahrassa is a Ph.D. graduate student in the counseling psychology department at the University of Minnesota. She does research on ethnic minority populations including the study of immigrants and their families. She readily participates in the Zarathushti activities of the small Minnesota community. (Photo Nazneen and her father Dr Feraydoon Bahrassa MD)

Aloo Madon, 90, recalls her life in an interview with Rushad Pavri

I met Mrs Aloo Madon at her residence in Queens where she has been living for nearly 50 years and with the exception of deafness, at 90 years, is in perfect health and good spirits (she doesn't look any older than 75).

Early Days in Karachi Aloo Madon was born and raised in Karachi and spoke of the small Parsi community of about 3000 people as being very close-knit. They had their own fire temple and a Doongerwaadi. She vividly recalled the good times she had during all the community gatherings like Navjotes, weddings and Pateti/Navroz, the community was very fond of "feasts", something that has thankfully not changed to this day! In those days there were naataks (plays) and light sporting events during these gatherings with everybody participating.

She went to the Mama Parsi Girls School (which is still operating), and history was her favorite subject. As Karachi had a large military base, she was in contact with British families with whom Parsis had friendly relations (she even did volunteer service in the air force during WW 2).

Congress Connection. Being more open to western education and culture, the Parsis acquired good jobs. However, the community also had strong ties with the Congress Party, especially Gandhiji, whom her mother knew in person, and whom the Parsis hosted and escorted whenever he visited Karachi. She said the community contributed a lot to the Congress and were certainly not indifferent bystanders to those historical events. She recalled a major Congress conference in Karachi where the Parsis got together in hosting and arranging transportation for Congressmen. Her mother used to participate in street protests carrying flags and banners! and they never thought the country would be split - Partition was something they never imagined.

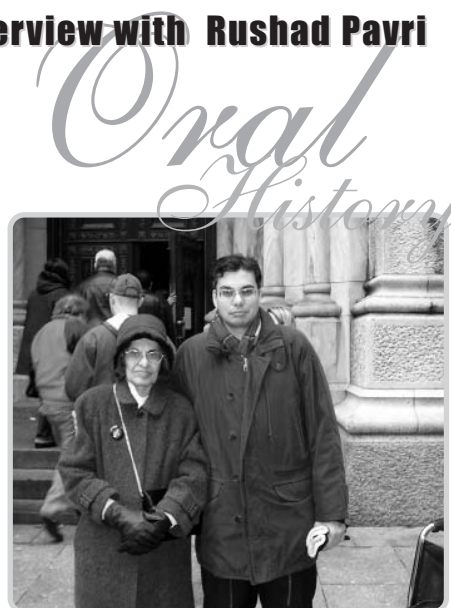
Experiences in North America. After marriage, she moved to Bombay for a couple of years where her husband worked for Air India. As

he was not satisfied with the quality of work at Air India and since they were young and energetic, they decided to immigrate to North America. After four years in Montreal, they moved to Miami since she could not tolerate the Canadian winter!

In Miami, they had a taste of racial discrimination. This was the 1950s, and segregation was still very much the law in southern US. Her husband could not find a job (they would call him for an interview and then realize that he was not "white") and the people were unfriendly. They were happy to leave and move to NYC where her husband got a job immediately (in Delta airlines) and she got a job almost immediately as a salesperson in the perfume department at Macy's.

She vividly recalled how she was walking around the city and saw a sign that Macy's was hiring sales staff. She spontaneously applied and after undergoing some basic arithmetic and other tests, she was offered the job right away much to the surprise of her husband! She had a wonderful time there, people were very friendly, and when she left nine months later as she was pregnant, they showered her with generous baby gifts. She recalled those days with great fondness and gratitude, which was a relief after their experiences in Miami. She also recalled the kindness and generosity of their Italian neighbors in Queens who, during the times when she was in Karachi to visit her mother, would bring food every day for her husband and son. In New York she also worked with the Election Board as a polling inspector.

In the early days, as there were few Parsis in the US there were no community organizations. Her husband, being an Athornan, was frequently performing Jashans and Navjotes. She feels that inter-faith marriages are unavoidable and not a bad thing at all. Her plea to the youngsters is to keep the faith intact. When asked about the religion and its impact on her life, she said that the central theme of "Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good



Deeds" was her guiding principle, the essence of the faith.

Overall, she has no regrets for moving to the US, and feels at home here although she misses her family. She also misses having servants around -old habits die hard! She still cooks Parsi food, her favorite dish being "palau-daar".

It was heartening to hear of her optimism for the future of the community in the US which she felt was quite secure as the younger generation was taking pains to keep the faith alive. She believes that the key to the success and survival of the Parsis is our ability to blend in with other cultures, all the while keeping our distinct identity intact.



Rushad Pavri is a post-doctoral fellow at The Rockefeller University in NYC doing research in Immunology. His hobbies are listening to music and he also sings with an amateur chorus in the city. He lives in NYC.

Mr. Rusi Sorabji, California, relates his life story to Rushad Pavri, New York



Rusi Sorabji in Jablu as a baby (above)

Mr. Rusi Sorabji lives in California since 1996 with his family, after retiring from India. He engages in his hobbies, of writing, electronics and gardening. Mr. Sorabji was very enthusiastic about the Zarathushti Oral History Project (ZOHP) and was very happy and eager to share his memories and views with me.

Childhood Mr. Sorabji born and raised in Delhi, during the late stages of British rule in India recounts a happy childhood with fond memories of school and community life. Being born to religious Kadmi and Shehnsai parents, he had the enviable experience of having two birthdays and two New Year parties every year – since both parents' calendars had to be duly honored! His navjote at Dadiseth agiary in Mumbai was a very memorable affair with much partying, including the traditional band playing the popular community favorites and the latest Hollywood tunes. He remembers such occasions in those days as being more elaborate and colorful than today.

In British India, the Parsis were the most privileged community, holding most of the prestigious jobs open to Indians and contributing greatly to the growth of commerce and industry. He mentioned that it was commonplace to find portraits of King George or Queen Victoria in Parsi homes, the community being very loyal and faithful to the crown. His father, very active in community affairs was a representative of the community, and met regularly with Jawaharlal Nehru and

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, to secure the rights of the minority community in India and Pakistan.

Professional Years Mr Sorabji worked in a variety of different fields, including manufacturing and sales in pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and electronics. He worked in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, where there was a small Parsi community with several Indians being attracted by the excellent salaries, satisfactory labor laws and good working environment. As he put it, his salary in the UAE was more than that of the President of India! The community in the UAE was close-knit as is often found when one is living away from home.

Partition Days Perhaps the most disturbing period of his life was the post-Independence period of 1947, when the devastating Hindu-Muslim communal riots engulfed Delhi and several parts of northern India. As a small and politically neutral community, the Parsis were caught in the middle of this bloodbath. The rampaging mobs were killing indiscriminately. For them, "you were either Hindu or Muslim", he says, and they didn't know who a Parsi was. For over three weeks his family stayed at home, surviving on vegetables and spices (like coriander and chilies that grew in their garden) and whatever little they had stocked up. At times, his parents would go hungry so that the children could eat. Fortunately, an old Christian servant came over and brought them some rice, flour and sugar (which he had salvaged from a ration shop that had been ransacked by the rioters). He also recalled how his father intervened to save the life of a Muslim boy who was about to be killed by some Sikhs in their neighborhood. This grim story was a timely reminder of the impact of such mindless violence on innocent bystanders.

Oral History

In California Mr Sorabji takes part in the local Dar-e-Meher activities and regrets that many Parsi families in the area do not do the same. He regrets instances of tension between Iranian and Indian Zarathushtis in the US, due to lack of understanding and acceptance of each other's customs and traditions, since such minor differences are to be expected, given that the two communities had lived apart for over a millennium (Indian Parsis in particular having adopted a plethora of Hindu customs and traditions). Nonetheless, he felt that the 20th century had been a great one for the community since it had seen the reuniting of these two separated branches of our faith.

In conclusion, he said, the ZOHP was a very "timely" enterprise and congratulated those responsible for it. He particularly hopes that this project will not end with just one issue of the FEZANA JOURNAL, but that it



Delhi Parsis 1926 (Photo Rusi Sorabji)

continues to collect and compile these memories of our lush ancestral heritage. For the youngsters his message is to stay true to the central tenet of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, to choose good company and to live a life of honesty, integrity and humility.

Kaizad Cama in conversation with Prof Kaikhosrov Irani

Those of us who know Professor Kaikhosrov Irani, or Keku Uncle, know of his ability to capture an audience and speak at length on just about any topic. On this day, his job was quite easy by those standards—the topic was his own life's story, and I have always been one to listen eagerly to Professor Irani.

CHILDHOOD We began with Professor Irani's childhood, growing up in Bombay in the 1920s and 1930s. Even as a child, it was evident that he had an active mind. Professor Irani's father, Dinshah Jijibhoy Irani, was lawyer and a noted scholar of Zarathushti Deen, and together they would immerse themselves in thoughtful discussion as they rode back home from Kaikhosrov's school. Professor Irani's father taught him the importance of practicing Zarathushtra's teachings in daily life and finding ways to make the world around him better. As Professor Irani described these conversations with his father to me, it became clear that an appreciation for philosophical thought was not the only trait passed from father to son. Two of his most notable characteristics—his sincere appreciation for Zarathushtra's message and his genuine optimism that good people and good, rational ideas will ultimately prevail—seem to have come directly from these interactions Professor Irani had with his father.

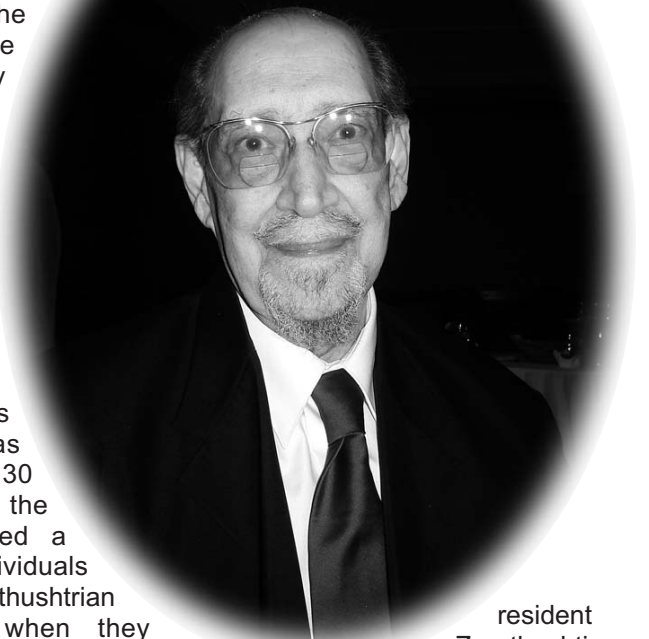
YOUNG LAWYER While a student at St. Xavier's College in Bombay, Professor Irani joined a group of Parsi youth who came together for discussions on literature and other topics. Despite his continued interest in philosophy, Professor Irani studied chemistry, physics and law. Despite the fact that his stint practicing law was brief—he argued only two trials—he again demonstrated his compassion by offering his services pro bono to an elderly gentleman in need of representation. Professor Irani struggled to find his passion in the courtroom, but he did meet and begin courting his future wife, another lawyer, named Piroja.

IMMIGRATING TO THE US

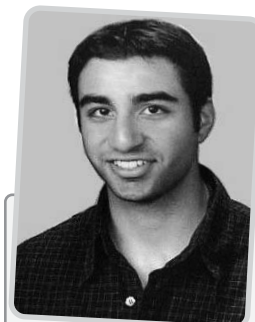
Professor Irani soon migrated to the U.S. to continue his research in physics, leaving Piroja behind for a short time before she joined him in the States. The year was 1947 and he was one of the early Zarathushtis to settle in America. For me, this was a unique window into the history of our community; at the time, there were only a handful of Zarathushtis already here and it would be more than 25 years before ZAGNY was officially created and 30 years before the community established a permanent home. Individuals had brought their Zarathushtian beliefs with them when they migrated here, but the identity of the community was that of a social group that came together for dinner on the New Year holidays. There was little talk of religious matters and certainly no formal mechanisms for exploring their religion. Whereas many Zarathushtis of Professor Irani's generation would have been used to a predominantly social/cultural Zarathushti community in India, Professor Irani missed the types of discussions that he had been able to enjoy in India, first with his father and subsequently with fellow Parsi youth at the university.

ZAGNY INVOLVEMENT As the years went on, Professor Irani helped bring academic thought to ZAGNY by organizing International Gatha Conferences and North American Zoroastrian Congresses, along with a number of lectures by other noted Zarathushti scholars. Professor Irani played an active role in ZAGNY's early development in other ways as well, voicing his support for the Navjote of Joseph Peterman, serving as ZAGNY's president in the 1990s, leading the adult classes for nearly 20 years, and serving as ZAGNY's

Oral History



resident Zarathushti scholar and favorite lecturer. When Professor Irani ended our discussion by sharing his optimism for the future of our New York Zarathushti community, I could not help but think how much that future owes to the consistent and substantial contributions of Professor Irani and the other pioneers of our community.



Kaizad lives in New York City where he is a senior consultant

within Sungard's risk management practice. He holds a BA and an MS from Stanford University. Since moving back to the east coast in 2004, he has taught religion and led discussion groups for the two oldest classes at ZAGNY.

Malcolm Baug, Bombay – The Emerald Colony

Dr Cyrus B. Toorkey, Cherry Hill, NJ, USA

Oral History

I was born in 1951 in the Parsi colony of Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari, a suburb of Bombay (Mumbai), India best known for the colony itself and for buffalo stables. Malcolm Baug was a green jewel in the growing sprawl of Bombay and by far the Parsi colony with the lushest vegetation. Fortunately, it still is. While others in the city awoke to the sounds of double-decker buses and taxi horns it was not unusual for me to awake to the crowing of a rooster or the trilling song of a tailor-bird or a wren. Every once in a while one also came across a rat snake, Russell's viper or cobra but they went their way and I went the opposite way!

The colony sits on the slopes of a small hill with two entrances through large imposing wrought-iron gates. Through one gate one entered the side with bungalows and quaint gardens while the other gate led to the section with two storied apartment buildings built and rented out by a Parsi charity for Parsis with lesser means. We children considered the entire colony as home-base. We knew everyone that lived there and felt completely safe going from one end to the other, even at night, as we walked the coconut-palm lined streets with dim lighting.

The center of the colony, physically and socially, was the gymkhana or club. Elders gathered there after their constitutional walks in the late afternoon while we kids played any of a number of games. Cricket, volley-ball, badminton, table-tennis, carom, hide-and-seek and typically Indian games such as 'nargolio' (seven-tiles) and 'gilli-danda' – we played them all. And we played them with abandon. Skinned elbows and knees were the norm and were treated with mercurochrome (yes folks it contained mercury and we did not die from it!), or tincture iodine or tincture benzoin. Years later, in 1966, a fire-temple was built in the colony.

The colony doctor was a retired army doctor who made house calls, if necessary, at any and all times of the day or night. The commonest



medications were a white chalky-tasting liquid and a pinkish slightly sweeter one mixed by a 'compounder', a semi-literate male. He poured the medicines into brown bottles and stuck small strips of hexagonal units on the side to indicate doses. If you were really sick, you got an injection (usually of penicillin) and took some rest.

The good schools were not close by, so most of us went, accompanied by maid-servants, by trains and buses to places like Bandra and Vile-Parle which had good English-medium schools run by missionaries. We learnt about elbow-room or lack thereof in the packed trains and

buses and survived it for eleven years

In the colony we developed life-long friendships (which are still ongoing), fell in love, got married and enjoyed life in general. Yes it was hot, yes it rained ninety inches in ninety days each summer, but we had a joie de vivre that we still carry with us even today.

Growing up in a Parsi colony was a blessing whose positive effects have lasted me to date. If you are ever in Bombay, go visit Malcolm Baug, it is still mostly the same and if you ask someone they may even remember me as the crazy wildlife guy who fell off the roof!

Cyrus B. Toorkey, wife Behnaz, daughter Roshni and son Darayus



Dr. Cyrus B. Toorkey came to the USA in 1982. He obtained his Ph.D. in Pathology from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, has lived in Wisconsin, Minnesota, California and now in Cherry Hill, NJ. He works as a pharmaceutical representative for McNeil Pediatrics a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson. He is actively involved in the community, a religion class teacher for over ten years, Vice-President of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) from 2002-2004 and President from 2004-2006.

Cyrus Toorkey in an interview with Zarnosh Maneckshaw



As I left the home of Cyrus Toorkey, my small dictaphone bearing the contents of our conversation, I felt an overwhelming sense that I had not only listened to a history of one man, but that I had listened to the voice of our entire community. Like many of us, Cyrus lives in a house in suburbia, located in a neatly organized development with other suburban families. I was greeted at the door not only by Cyrus, but also by his gorgeous collie, Zeus, which is a thoroughly apt name considering he was bigger than a Hyundai.

When we sat down, cup of tea in hand, I really had no idea what to expect. But I put on my best Tim Russert face, pressed record, and let Cyrus open up a whole new world to me. Though distinctly Parsi, a "pakka Bawa" without a doubt, he calls America his home. I marveled at his stories of living and working in Iran. His tone is warm and inviting, yet strikingly unapologetic. Behind his intelligent eyes and neatly trimmed mustache, there lives a man not only of deeply held spirituality, but also deeply held convictions.

At the time of the revolution, he fearlessly escaped Iran through less than "proper channels" and returned to India. But he was not to stay there for long. It was decided that his family should make the difficult decision of leaving the comforts of the gymkhana and take the journey to America, to enrich the opportunities for that next generation of Parsis who he held closest to his heart, his own children. European pioneers came in boats and traveled in covered wagons. We, the new pioneers, came in planes and travel in luxury sedans. I think we made out better.

Without a doubt, Cyrus Toorkey is an individual. He has lived an extraordinary life. His stories are distinctly his own, replete with his own "Toorkyisms," and they are always captivating. Yet his experiences are shared with all of us. Like all Parsis, he has experienced the love and joy of a closely-knit family. He has experienced the challenges of a demanding job and the sacrifices entailed in building a life for his family.

In that sense, we all have a little Cyrus in us. When I finally pushed stop, I had captured our past, present, and future, and warmth enveloped me because I knew our conversation led me to the essence of what it means to be a Parsi. We are strong enough to bear the burden of free will, smart enough to exercise it for the good of a greater community, and resilient enough to continue facing the world no matter what the challenge.

Zarnosh N. Maneckshaw, Esquire is a trial attorney in Philadelphia for the civil litigation firm of Fox Greenberg, P.C. He can be reached at Zarnosh.Maneckshaw@FoxGreenbergPC.com.



Brigadier Ervad Behram M Panthaki and Zenobia Panthaki

Interview with Hormuzd Katki



I have known Behram Panthaki as the longtime sole priest tirelessly serving the ZAMWI community. I knew that he was also a Brigadier General in the Indian Army, and this project gave me the chance to interview him and his wife Zenobia about their experiences.

Behram Panthaki knew he was meant for the Army: "I used to see the Gurkhas walking up and down the streets in their tilted Gurkha hats". True to his dream, he was commissioned in 1964 into the Corps of Signals, so he called up General Maneckshaw, who had him transferred to the Gurkhas, his own regiment. But then Behram wanted to be posted to a combat zone, so again he called General Maneckshaw, who had him assigned to his own battalion in Nagaland where the army was fighting a local insurgency movement. When they finally met, Maneckshaw said, "So YOU are the bugger!" But he had impressed the General, who had him appointed as his Aide-de-camp (ADC) in 1965. As a result, the two share a close bond: "Our relationship is like father and son. He mentored me..I have developed lots of his traits". Working as his Aide when Maneckshaw was Army Chief, Behram had an opportunity to see the inner mechanisms of government related to the planning and execution of the 1971 war for the liberation of Bangladesh, and the

coordination with civilian ministries to take over the administration of the liberated areas

During the war, Behram was with his unit at the Rajasthan border. It was an incisive operation that lasted December 4-16 1971 and by March 1972 most of the regiments were back in barracks. The Indian Army, without much resistance, had penetrated East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) along with the Mukti Bahini (the Liberation Army) fully supported by local villagers. Information gathered over months through human intelligence on strength, deployment and plans of the Pakistani Army, was another vital element that led to a swift and decisive victory. Behram draws a parallel to the Iraq War, where the US did not have a strategic goal; there was no human intelligence on the insurgency, and no plans for withdrawal or for handing over to the civil administration and no support from the local community.

After the war, Behram and Zenobia were married. As an officer's wife, Zenobia involved herself with welfare projects for soldiers' families, ran literacy programs and assisted them acquire skills which they put to good use when they returned to their villages, to generate additional income. The Panthakis consider their Army friends and colleagues as extended family and remain in close touch with them.

Behram had a successful career, holding key assignments in each rank, and finally rose to the rank of Brigadier. He commanded the Delhi Brigade, responsible for security of the capital and his skills were put to test in the aftermath of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

Some key assignments included a tenure in Leh and as Instructor at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.

Although they loved the military life, Behram took premature retirement to join his wife in Washington, where she had been transferred by the World Bank. His arrival resulted in the DC area now having a priest. ... "We had to think this through, it meant making a commitment. There were other challenges this continent is a mixing bowl for Parsis and Iranians. There were times when we had to introspect on some of the issues. My father at age 90 believed that religion must move with time, used to tell us that religion must move with time. There is a misperception that only those children born to Zarathushti fathers can have their navjotes. [But] in our scriptures both genders are given equal status. In the Yenge Hatam which is after every Nyaish, both men and women are blessed. [In] Fravardin Yasht, we recite '**naram ashaonam fravashim yazamaide, nairinam ashaonam fravashinam yazamaide**': naram is the male gender, nairinam the female, the souls of illustrious men and women are remembered and given equal mention. For interfaith marriages I have composed a unique ceremony which is well received and appreciated".

Behram also worked with NAMC to initiate the Mobedyar program, to ensure that the community has a reserve of young priests to take over from the current crop. He is training me in this program: "I think we should be preparing right now, Hormuzd!" He is beloved by our community, and I enjoyed interviewing him and his wife.

Sam Bhathena

In an interview with Hormuzd Katki

Sam Bhathena and my father have been friends for over forty years now, and our families are close. Sam uncle grew up in Pune at the JN Petit Orphanage for boys (now JN Petit Technical High School). Since my grandfather also grew up there, I was interested to learn about Sam uncle's experience.

Sam uncle's father died when he was 4, and his mother was poor, so he was sent to the J.N. Petit orphanage and his sister was sent to the Avabai Petit Orphanage for girls in Bandra (where it still operates). In a typical day at the orphanage, "we get up exactly at 6 am, we take shower, brush teeth etc, then we go down for prayer at 6:45 ... we prayed all of us together ... at 7:30 we all went to breakfast together, around 9 am the school starts, we go to the various classes, a break around 10:30-11, we go for lunch at 12:30, at 1:15 again

school starts and it ends at 4pm. Where either you play cricket or hockey or soccer or boxing, 4:30-6 was compulsory for sports ... at 6:45 pm you come down again to the prayer room and pray again for a half hour ... We used to get half a day off

on Sundays, after lunch we can go out of the orphanage we can go to movies, but no interaction with the girls unfortunately." I realized that Sam's strong sense of religious faith comes from the twice-daily prayer he grew up with. The school is a



technical school, schooling students in various practical disciplines. In spite of being in an orphanage, he believes that he got a top-flight education: "We had an advantage in being an orphanage in that the classes were small, only 200 students in the whole orphanage. There was constant personal attention by the teacher ... I got one of the best educations, I never felt that we were restricted ... I know many of my classmates [in US], many have become doctors and so on."

Today, the school must meet ends by allowing 1500 day students who pay tuition. There are still Parsi boarders at the school, and the trustees and the principal remain committed to enabling their free education. Sam uncle benefited from this profound and far-sighted act of community service, and this is the source of his strong feelings of obligation to give back to the Zarathushti community that has

given him so much: "The orphanage was one of my best times in my life. What I am today is because of [the community's] philanthropy and foresight."

Professional Life Sam Bhatena became interested in biochemistry, and since his mother pleaded with him to stay in India, he finished his PhD in Bombay. But upon finishing, he knew his research future was in the West, and he came to Washington DC in 1971 to work at the National Institutes of Health (where my father once worked, and today I work). A few years later, he grabbed a chance to work at the USDA from where he recently retired as one of the world's leading authorities on human nutrition. In the mid-70's in DC, the small Zarathushti community would meet in private houses. The need for a formal association became apparent as it became clear that families were settling here to raise their own

families. Sam uncle was present when the ZAMWI charter was drawn up; he saw the community grow in the 80's with an influx of Iranian Zarathushtis fleeing the Iranian Revolution. ZAMWI has been able to keep both Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis in one community, and Sam uncle thinks this must continue: "I see a good future, as long as we are compromising and willing to accommodate each other, we will continue as one association. That may give us more opportunity to grow, as that will keep our numbers high. If we break up into two associations, we will ultimately suffer."

(For Bio of author see page 41)

Section 2 Life in North America Today

Commentary on Zarathushti Values

What does our daily life have to do with Oral Histories? A lot, I believe. We are a part of history! We are building history now. Our actions define who we are more than what we say or believe. In each town, some members come forward to share the responsibility of organization. Others actively aid each other in their career or social networking, for a community of immigrants has few existing safety nets, such as we might have had in the home countries of India and Iran. Our good deeds define us, and influence far more than any exhortation. How we face the challenges confronting us now, is as much a part of history as the lives of our ancestors and the stories of our elders. **Nawaz Merchant**

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Life in the US is not a cakewalk!

Since immigration is such a dominant event in the lives of our community members, we explored it a little deeper, and learned about some of the challenges faced by Zarathushti families in North America. I asked numerous community members about the issues they face: What have they found meaningful in their extended community in North America? Why do they belong to associations where they must travel forty to sixty miles to attend events and religious classes each month? Why do they bother to build friendships with people who are spread over such a wide area?

One key facilitator appears to be the general ease of travel, so that an hour's drive is considered entirely acceptable. Families who live in cities and rely on mass-transport, however, are at a disadvantage here, and find it difficult to participate actively in community events.

Why do Zarathushti families need to connect? Zarathushti families belong to multiple social circles. While they may or may not socialize with their immediate neighbors of various races, many are integrated into some local Indian or Persian social group. Many Zarathushtis play integral roles in PTAs, school volunteer groups, and peer organizations at work, and more are linked into internet friends' circles or email virtual groups and hobby clubs. And still they frequently seek out the nearest Zarathushti association and try to connect themselves to other immigrant Zarathushti families. Why?

Many community members said that raising a family was their primary challenge, and that connecting with other Zarathushtis gave them a sort of support group (despite the fact that few Zarathushtis live close enough to be of any immediate aid in such matters as picking up kids from day-care, doctor's visits or helping out with babysitting). The next most common response was that they simply enjoyed socializing with other 'bawajis'. Despite the time pressures of building careers, they make the effort to bring their children to religious classes, because seeing other kids with similar parental rules and a shared culture, builds their own children's confidence!

Issues faced. When we speak of the different issues faced by the immigrant generations and their children, let us not forget a very important constituency, their parents! Parents of immigrants bear a singular burden. Frequently they care for elderly relatives in the home country without any young shoulders to inherit that responsibility. Their hearts are divided, sometimes, with competing needs: to stay and support their aging siblings, or aid their children with the task of raising kids. Occasionally they lead fractured lives, part of the year in North America, and the remainder in their home country. In both these places they feel reluctant to commit to long term engagements, since the flight to (or back from) North America is only a few months away. Yet they are a part of the North American community, because they are integral to our lives. Despite their chafing at the lack of independence when they cannot drive in North America, they return and give their children and grandkids their staunch unquestioning love.

Challenges The North American Community also has other challenges. The issue of intermarriage is forefront in the evolution of our community. Nowhere else are intermarried couples so interspersed within, so integral to the Zarathushti community. Since our acceptance and willingness to grow will determine our future, we have included articles from intermarried couples in this compilation, as they too, shape the living history we are creating.

So what's next? What further challenges await us? One significant issue is how to deal with our parent's aging or illness, separated, as we are, by national boundaries, their inability to fly or migrate, and the cost of comprehensive health coverage for elders. Other issues are financial uncertainties in the corporate environment, the pressures of saving for retirement and college expenses, how to cope with our own aging, and our reluctance to relocate away from hard-won local communities despite the cost of living in metropolii. And through it all, immigrants feel a growing sense of alienation from the more orthodox views in "the old

Nawaz Merchant

Oral History



Nawaz Merchant is a professional working for Johnson and Johnson supporting the Pharmaceuticals group in the Business Analysis Department. She lives in New Jersey with husband Hoshi (in photo) and their two sons. She actively participates in ZAGNY activities and enjoys reading, gardening and creative writing.

country", where change moves more slowly.

No, life in North America is not a cakewalk. As a minority, we face hurdles in our professional lives. As parents, we face the pressures of saving for ever-rising college tuition costs, medical costs, and the anxiety of saving for retirement despite the uncertain tenure of our employment. Our children face challenges at school, and intense pressure to compete, yet experience our displeasure when they do not adhere to our expectations. At school they confront situations that their parents have not, while they search for an identity that encompasses both the ancient heritage they inherited, and the fast paced future ahead.

Yet despite these hurdles, the Zarathushti community in NA is constantly reinventing itself and grows more vibrant and self-aware with each year. Built up on a growing self-awareness, we are an earnest, supportive community of volunteers, families sharing responsibilities and raising the next generation of confident, loving, upstanding citizens of the world.

Raising Children as an Intermarried couple

Khursheed Parakh

I am a Parsi Zarathushti married to an American Christian (United Church of Christ denomination). My husband is a mid-westerner from South Dakota. This is my second marriage. My first was to a man raised as a Parsi Zarathushti but didn't really believe or practice any aspect of our religion. When that marriage dissolved, I had to re-examine my beliefs – what did I really want from a life partner, the father of any children I might have? And the answer was very clear to me – I wanted a good man, someone who believed in God and believed in the values that I hold dear. I found in my present husband all of these things. We got married after a period of time getting to know each other and our families. We've discovered, along the way that we share so many values despite the fact that we are of different religions. We are an intermarried couple but have very similar views of God and life principles.

What will we teach our child?

We now have a daughter together. She is the delight of our lives. She is a lovely little girl with her daddy's hair and her mommy's eyes. Before ever we thought of having children, we had discussed what we would teach our children, we had both agreed that we were more inclined to a spiritual view of religion than a ritualistic one. I am very proud of the fact that the Zarathushti Din is a "thinking" religion, a religion which asks you to make choices about how you will think, speak and act. My husband appreciates that Christianity speaks often of faith in God and that God provides for those who believe in Him. My husband has read a lot about Zarathushtrian religion and I

have always been very familiar with the Bible.

We both believe that all religions fundamentally try to teach people to come closer to God through learning to get along with their fellow men. I have always believed that the essential humanity that we all share, makes us more alike than different despite perhaps different ways that we choose to worship God. There are many paths to God and no one way is better than the other. All that is needed is an honest and devout heart. So this is what my husband and I will teach our little girl. We may or may not have her Navjote done, we may or may not go with her to Church, but we will introduce her to the teachings of both our religions, hopefully through the example we set before her, of how we live our lives and interact with others. We will give her the exposure that we can, to the values that we hold dear. There is a wonderful book by Linda Kavelin Popov called "The Virtues Guide" which is a straight-forward way to teach children about virtues (values) and I will source heavily from it to teach our little girl about respect for others, morality, spirituality and faith.

Cultural differences. Beyond religion, a couple like us faces many cultural differences. Differences of perspective tend to gain traction when they pertain to raising children. My husband and I are uncommonly fortunate to have few such occasions, perhaps due to a lack of preconceived notions about how our family should be run. Strangely enough, our upbringing was very similar despite the fact that we grew up on opposite sides of the planet. I think, fundamentally, if parents are committed to each other, willing to work towards harmony in the home, then the children of such a union will navigate the sea of intermarriage

with far less confusion than is generally imagined or assumed.

Ultimately, as the wonderful saying goes, children learn what they live. If you love them and are honest about your differences and your similarities, they will learn to be grounded, well-adjusted and good human beings – you just need to be that way yourself as a parent. And that, perhaps, applies equally to couples who share the same religion, as to those who do not.

Khursheed Parakh is a professional working for Target Corporation. She presently lives in Minneapolis with her husband Joel and her daughter Zara Natasha. When she has a (rare) free moment, she likes to read, listen to music, and watch Brit-coms and travel shows. She has completed an MBA in marketing from Rutgers University and also holds degrees in International Studies and Hospitality.



Oral History



Philanthropy of Immigrant Zarathushtis

Framroze Patel CPA

Oral History

During the month of July and August 2007 the Pramukh Swami of Swami Narayan "panth" will inaugurate two temples in North America. (They already have ten consecrated temples in North America). The Sikh community in Toronto and the surrounding area has at least seven Gurudwaras. The Jain community in Toronto inaugurated a temple in July 2007 at a cost of \$6 million dollars, all monies raised by the community. These communities have managed to establish these places of worship by relying on the financial contribution of their local membership.

Even though the early funding of our Dar-e-Mehers came from Zarathushti philanthropists, the Zarathushti community of North America has realized that funding of any future projects has to be financed from the contributions from within the community. For future funding of any major project in North America, the only option we have is: self-reliance. I want to address the aspect of philanthropy as it relates to social service.

Model to follow. There is one institution whose model is worth emulating: BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (aka Bochasanwasi Sri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sansstha). BAPS is primarily a socio-spiritual organization. BAPS strives to care for the world by caring for families and individuals. Their social service is offered to all, irrespective of class, creed, color or country, just as we, the Zarathushtis, believe and practice. This laudable method of operation is not different from the Zarathushti "way-of-life". Our core belief is: "Happiness to whom who makes others happy".

One of the principal aims of BAPS is never to forget their roots. The BAPS organization outside India is the major source of financing medical activities, schools and educational institutions, environmental and social activities in India. Briefly, 400,000 patients are treated free of charge annually, 31 educational institutions impart free education to 11,000 students, 5,000

scholarship are awarded per year, and disaster relief operations are undertaken as needed in India. Their environmental activities include tree planting campaigns, well recharging and rain harvesting. There is an eco-friendly organization.

North American philanthropy. We, the Zarathushtis of the Western world, have done our part well. Each year thousands of dollars are sent for various Atash-Behrams, and Parsi General Hospital collectively supported by all. These fund-raisers are led by very modest individuals who shun the limelight, but inspire others to follow in their footsteps. More locally, Zarathushti Associations, both individually and collectively through FEZANA, have student scholarships and loan programs, as well as critical assistance programs for medical and emergency needs.

The Zarathushti community of tri-state areas of NY, NJ and CT has donated for diverse groups such as victims of Hurricane Katrina, Afghanistan, and Pakistan Earthquake, and other disasters. One very noteworthy project undertaken by some of ZAGNY members is: to provide annual economic assistance to the staff of Mumbai doongerwadi. (Tower of Silence) This contribution to the forgotten section of our community is undeniably most worthy of praise.

It is very encouraging to note that philanthropy of Zarathushtis of North America is not limited to political boundaries. Zarathushtis of Indian sub-continent origin have contributed to charities in Iran, for example earthquake in Bam. Likewise, the members of Iranian associations in North America have enthusiastically and willingly participated in call for financial donations. Let us not forget that the largest monetary contribution to Zarathushti community in North America have come from Iranian Zarathushtis. In the recent past, Iranian Zarathushtis have contributed significant sums of money to charities in India and United Kingdom. Example:

magnificent donation for establishment of new Dar-e-Meher in London, and home for priest and aged Zarathushtis in Mumbai.

Is this enough? This is very encouraging, however is it enough? Our primary focus should be improving the economic lot of fellow Zarathushti children in India. At least one tenth of school age children live outside of metro-areas. This population is economically and educationally deprived. The majority of these children live in rural areas where educational facilities are scant. Even though there are three orphanages in Southern Gujarat (Bulsar, Navsari, Broach, Dang, Thana and Rajpipla districts/sub-divisions, to name a few centers of Zarathushti population outside metro-areas) the parents are reluctant to send their children to orphanages for education. The reason: if the children leave the parent's house who will work in farms. Some of the Zarathushtis are so poor that they live in huts, without running water and sanitary facilities. Some of you would not believe this. But our philanthropy should be directed to uplift that section of our community which is not as fortunate as we, in North America,

While we are on the subject of philanthropy, let me quote a few lines from "Parsi Luster on Indian Soil" by H.D. Darukhanawalla (Published 1937 Pg 97) I want you take to heart the unique method of fund-raising by the founder of Surat Parsi Orphanage, funded by Seth Rustomji M. Kooka. "Well-known Parsi philanthropist of priestly class born in Surat who rose from humble beginning-trading in silk with China-to be a partner in the Chohoi Kuka Silk Mill. Kooka founded the Parsi Orphanage, Surat, in 1912, and publicly donated Rs. 3.5 lakhs to Surat educational schemes. His private charity was very extensive.

He secured Rs.3 lakhs from friends. His favorite method was notable.

He used to give a sum to the Orphanage in the name of a friend on occasions of rejoicing, etc., and then he used the "receipt" of that institution as a gift-packet like a cheque and secured the sympathy of that friend in greater measure. And the friend will then send the donation of equal amount to Surat Parsi Panchayet".

What a unique way to get others motivated to give.

This is what I believe: **our philanthropy should be directed to uplift that section of our community which is not as fortunate as we are, in North America.**

Framroze K Patel was educated at the Surat Parsi Orphanage. He was awarded Associate membership of Institute of Cost and Management Accountant, London. After migrating to the US he earned license to practice as Certified Public Accountant and Business Valuation Analyst. He also earned Masters in Business Administration from St John University, New York. He was the former president of FEZANA.



EVOLUTION OF THE ZARATHUSHTI BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE TRI-STATE AREA

Arnaz Maneckshana, President – WZCC, New York Chapter

Most of us are aware of associations like ZAGNY which are founded across North America since the 1970's. As has been the case such regional organizations have focused on the religious, cultural and social aspects of our community. All through 1980's and early 90's they have done an exemplary job of building Dare Mehrs, conducting cultural events and establishing religion classes for our youths.

What had been missing during that time was an appropriate venue to build on the entrepreneurial spirit of our community. It seemed the community at large was thirsting for a forum to exchange business ideas and an opportunity to network. The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce was founded in 2000 at the Seventh World Zarathushti Congress to satisfy just these needs.

The mission of the WZCC is to energize the Zarathushti entrepreneurial spirit through a network of businesses and professionals worldwide. As a founding member of the New York Chapter I have observed tremendous growth in its membership. Our humble beginning of a 5 member chapter has now grown to a significant record of 45. Members comprise of different ages, professions and businesses including a significant number of females and students.

It is heartening to witness established, successful entrepreneurs eager to foster future business owners with their knowledge and expertise. They are passionate about our legendary heritage of ethical business practices. It is a pleasure to be mentored and motivated by them. The success stories shared are testimonials of hard work, networking and power of referrals.

A variety of topics are discussed at the WZCC quarterly meetings, sometimes by invited guest speakers. The energetic committee strives to address the diverse needs of its members. Most of all we enjoy getting to know some amazing people in an entirely different setting and occasionally build business relationships with them.



I proudly recognize the foundation is rock solid and the entrepreneurial spirit has been awakened. We are definitely on our way to meeting the challenges of globalization and seizing the endless opportunities out there.

Since 1995 Arnaz has been a Financial Consultant with AXA Equitable. In that capacity she has helped many clients in the NY-NJ-Connecticut area achieve their financial goals. She started her practice after a successful career on Wall Street working for major corporations like Citibank. Prior to that she was employed by the Taj Group of Hotels for 8 years in India.

Arnaz is an alumnus of the University of Bombay having earned a Masters Degree in Accounting.

Arnaz is very active in the community, volunteers at organizations such as the Red Cross, the American Association of Diabetes, in addition to her current role as President of WZCC, NY Chapter. She enjoys hiking and the theater in New York.

www.ArnazManeckshana.com

SECTION 3

While our immigrant generation sought stability in good jobs, they want for their children the freedom to do what they enjoy, (and earn a good living doing it!) Our children already incorporate and run businesses, and move a dozen times

Where are we headed?

before they are thirty years old. They assimilate technology with the same cool anticipation with which we immigrants might pop open a new box of cereal! They will define themselves as Zarathushtis based on their interactions with us. Armed such, we can help them address the challenges they will face. Their opinions may change as they re-invent themselves afresh, but they are Zarathushti. And our community continues to evolve. **(Nawaz Merchant)**



Oral History

FEZANA, ZYNA AND ZAC
PRESENT

'Next Generation Now'

Keep the Flame Burning

Hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago



Do you care about the future of your community?
What kind of world will you shape for your kids?

This October 12-14, the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, in conjunction with ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America), will host the first in a series of 'Next Generation' conferences designed to strengthen and perpetuate our Zoroastrian communities by stimulating inter-generational dialogue, cultivating leadership, and paving a path for real-world problem solving.

How can you make a difference in your community? Learn how to mobilize your generation for the next set of challenges on the horizon.

It starts with you.

To learn more about the Next Generation conference 2007, Please contact:
Tinaz Dhunjisha (tdhunjisha@gmail.com),
Nikan H. Khatibi (nikan2@aol.com)

For Registration, Please contact: Zenia Mehta (ZeniaMehta@gmail.com)



What is the identity of the Zarathushti youth here in North America? That's one question that kept on coming back to me, time and again, as I interviewed several youth, religious leaders, historians and professors for a story I was doing for one of Toronto's national paper- the National Post.

As a journalist, the news element to my story, (ie the 14th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Toronto) was perfect timing, but what was more important for the long-term well being and health of the community, was the ability of congress members to initiate mentorship programs. These initiatives, if successful, will go a long way empowering the youth and help shape community thinking in the future.

Setting on the path to build a truly unique Zarathushti identity for the youth and the future generations will take a lot of hard work, but it's possible to build over time. It requires changing set beliefs, and evolving older traditions to finally ensure that the newer set become future leaders.

As I interviewed many within the community and those who have spent a lifetime studying our community, such as London professor John Hinnells, (who has written over 25 books on our religion and community), one thought clearly emerged: Our youth need to be encouraged and involved within the community more than they currently are. Developing programs to this aim, and creating an environment which they can relate to, is crucial. Partnering with role models and creating mentoring programs (such as the one just started by the Zoroastrian Society Ontario, ZSO) will certainly raise the level of interaction between the older and the new generation.

But while that's being done, it's also important that our youth equally respect the cultural, as well as the religious practices of the first generation Zarathushstis, many of whom who originate from India, Iran or Pakistan. A balance therefore needs to be struck, if the community as a whole is to truly go ahead; so say experts in the community as well as the Zarathushti youth themselves.

Anahita Dua, a medical student, social activist and recipient of the 2007 FEZANA student award says, "One of the biggest problems in the religious world today is trying to impose culture on religion and vice versa. Although there is naturally a link, especially in terms of rituals and rites, the actual religion can be practiced by anyone, anywhere, without a second thought about cultural background." "However, identity, which is made up of many different things, definitely hinges on cultural heritage and I feel it is very important for youth to acknowledge the heritage of their parents, but it is equally important for the parents to acknowledge the culture of their children. Being born and raised in North America makes one a North American and it is silly for parents to try to push a completely foreign set of cultural ideals on youth claiming that without these foreign traditions the children cannot be good Zarathushstis" Acknowledging this is crucial to the present evolution of the Zarathushti identity in North America.

Hinnells says, the big challenge is passing on the religion to the younger generation. "(Elders) in the community fear they are loosing the ethnicity, their language (from their homeland) and they want a certain religion, (but) there's a lot of dispute among the elders about what constitutes the heart of the religion." Hinnells, who did a survey of 18,840 Zarathushti respondents, published in his new book, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora*, says that our community listed declining numbers as the biggest problem. "But the second biggest danger was the divisions caused by the rows and arguments and disputes, which was putting off a lot of young people."

"In North America," says Hinnells, "Leadership primarily remains in the hands of the older generation and the younger set feels frustrated that their interests are not being met."

Darius Bharucha, religious teacher at the ZSO Dar-e-meher in Toronto, says the key to preserving Zarathushti identity in young North American Zarathushstis is religious education. "It's important for them to know who they are and where they come from, so that they can assert their own unique identity, which makes sense to them, and one which also fits in a multicultural society." Bharucha says cultural identity will evolve over time.

"To get more youth involved," says Nikan Khatibi, chair, Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) says, "one needs to create fruitful and ambitious events that will inspire them. Building friendship and camaraderie must come first, before one can begin reading doctrine."

Khatibi says Zarathushti culture in North America has the opportunity to reach new heights but he worries about the failure of cultural incorporation. "Many youth are brought up in households where they either feel they should shun the culture because of the lack of education from parents, or turn away from the culture because of too much force to accept the culture. Just the right amount of exposure is needed to enable the youth themselves to define their cultural identity." Community Leaders and active well-wishers need to take this into account in the development of their ongoing projects, so that youth can find their own identity and space, and then take their rightful place to "accept the baton" of community leadership in time.

Rakshande Italia is a columnist for several Toronto newspapers. Her fortnightly column, Desi Dialogues looks at the South Asian community in Toronto. She also regularly writes business stories for the CBC.ca, National Post and Toronto Star. You can reach her at rakshande.italia@gmail.com

ZARATHUSHTIS ARRIVE ON THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

Homi Gandhi, President ZAGNY

The first wave of student/professionals from the Indian sub-continent to the North American Continent faced similar issues as those faced by the earlier Diaspora in India over 1000/1200 years ago. However, the circumstances were different, and the world was different. The second Diaspora had not come out of a country where their faith was the State Religion. They came from a country in which they had made a predominant contribution in the last 3 centuries in politics, social services, industry, commerce, charity or community affairs. So when they met on Sundays for "Dhaan-Sakh" parties in each others' homes or celebrated Pateti or Jamshedi NauRoos in community halls, they pondered how to establish/organize themselves, how to pass on their legacy to future generations.

At about the same time, a group of zarathushti professionals/business persons were coming to the new continent from the old mother country, Iran. This flow increased after the revolution in the late 1970s with similar thoughts-how to maintain their traditions and pass on their legacy to future generations. This gave birth to the first wave of local associations of the 1960s and 1970s which was backed by the generous donations of Arbab Rustam & Morvarid Guiv for buying/building properties and establishing the Dar-e-Mehrs in the 1970s and the 1980s. These associations/groups then came together to form a federation, so that without losing their individual identities, the Zarathushti community could have its voice heard at the North American continent level. This led to the birth of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) in 1987.

Religious Education:

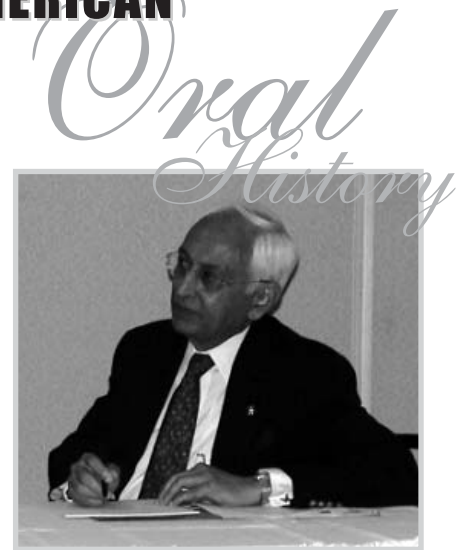
A band of dedicated parent volunteers, associations established formalized education classes but the parent-teachers who taught those

classes decided to educate themselves first on the meaning of prayers and our history. Many had the foresight to formalize a curriculum, which is now a unified and formalized learning syllabus at the continent level. In this process they produced publications like "The Good Life" (Religious emblem program for the Boys Scouts of America) and "Zoroastrian Legacy". These efforts were helped by existing and new priests from the North American Mobed Council (NAMC). The NAMC did not only publish papers, books, and literature guiding the lay community, it also created a cadre of Mobedyars to help the community fill the gap of its spiritual needs.

Philanthropy:

Local associations and individuals are interested in building their own centers and Dar-e-Mehrs, but also donate for their fellow brethren. Katrina floods and the Bam earthquake are some examples of natural disasters, as well as efforts for the victims of the Tsunami and the South Asia earthquake. North American Zarathushtis have contributed handsomely for many needy causes for the last 30+ years, and for some in the community, continental-wide donation drives for Udvada Atash Behrams and Parsi General Hospital are annual phenomena.

It is with the same sense of pride that the community and the local associations have raised funds for building/expanding their own centers/Dar-e-Mehrs. One such example has been the raising of \$ 1 million by the New York area Zarathushtis in less than 3 months for buying a new center property. At the present time, there are at least 7 or 8 such associations raising funds to establish their own centers across the continent.



Educational Scholarship:

Our community for centuries has valued the opportunity of higher education for our youth and so such programs continued over here too. In addition to the FEZANA and individual association scholarships, Fali Chothia scholarship has served the community well throughout these years. Now scholarships are established even for the arts, music, and sports activities.

Industry and Commerce:

Many Zarathushti youths have graduated from Ivy League and other prestigious colleges and are working as senior professionals in many industries. Some hold very high positions in educational and research institutions. Some have started their own businesses. The initiation of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) has given a shot in the arm for such individuals.

Youth Community Service:

Our youth have gone to villages of India, Mexico, Guyana, Kenya, Palestine and many other places to help communities in initiating programs against malnutrition of children, educating women about family planning and AIDS awareness, micro finance, self-help, etc. They have participated in the

Xerxes Vania at the WZCC Conference, Toronto presenting Business Entrepreneurial Initiatives



It is up to us to find new solutions to the old problems. Let us have the courage to discuss this issue without tearing each other apart. As Sir Walter Scott said, **"Without courage, there cannot be Truth, and without Truth there can be no other virtue"**.

And let me conclude this dream of mine by quoting what I read almost 6 years ago from a youth to the question of "What is your view on the survival of our Zarathusti faith". She wrote, "I agree that the faith of Zarathustra will survive because even young Zarathushtis believe strongly in its tenets and teachings, and we will be able to pass on our beliefs and traditions to our children and grandchildren. I too will do this, and will try my best to protect my faith by being righteous and by following the commandments of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. I will also be kind and generous to others."

This answer is representative of the common sentiments expressed by our youth working for the "Good Life" emblem award. It has been inspirational to me throughout these last 6 years. This is the wealth of our community. They are the true leaders of tomorrow. Nurture them, help them, and guide them so that they achieve their fullest potential. When such youngsters will be in charge of the community's affairs of tomorrow, I have no fear for the future of our faith. **I truly believe that if we continue to have such youth in our community, the Best of Our Community is yet to come! Ushta te !**

Habitat-for-Humanity programs and in cleaning up of polluted rivers.

Zarathushti Identity Awareness and Inter-Faith activities:

In addition to inter-faith activities carried out by individuals and associations, FEZANA has reached out at the continental and, at times international level. These efforts have created great awareness for our community. FEZANA, as an UN NGO, has committed to further UN humanitarian initiatives and forged ties with other NGOs to strengthen the organization's continuing commitment to promote peace, social justice and dignity for all.

Yes, the Zoroastrian Community HAS ARRIVED on the North American continent! What do we, what should we, do next????

We have been building local association centers, Dar-e-Mehrs, libraries, cultural centers in the last 35+ years. We need to start thinking about building a National, nay a North American, Cultural and Educational Center. In my opinion, the architecture of this center should reflect our old Persian architecture and the building should include a library, a cultural and research center on the lines of the Smithsonian, where young and old, scholars and laity, Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis can find the necessary information (prayers, history, culture, etc.) on our community with the help of interactive computerized equipment. This center should also include a consecrated fire temple. I know that this will arouse emotion in many people. But a time has come to discuss this without emotions and with respect for each other's views.

When our ancestors arrived on the shores of India in the first Diaspora, they found solutions for their survival. We have carved out a distinct identity in this new Diaspora.



Ervad Soli and Jo Ann Dastur at the FEZANA Booth, Toronto Congress, June 2007

Closing Perspective: Where are we headed?

Nawaz Merchant

Why is it important for Zarathushti children to know their heritage? They're seeking it. Despite the self-centeredness of teenage vision, and the unbelievably busy schedules they manage, , young Zarathushtis made time for an inter-faith discussion in Boston. Others traveled over two hundred miles to attend a crowded, whirlwind 'mela' at the World Gujarati Conference last year. They are seeking their roots. **And in this nameless seeking, the Zarathushti Oral History Project was born.**

We had setbacks, certainly. When my first email requesting youth participation was met with a resounding silence, I wondered whether this project would die a quiet death and be buried in the gigabytes of archival email. It did not. A single request on the yahoo group generated such a flurry of responses I was quite taken aback. So, I wondered – Do elders want to participate, but our youth are hampered by the structure of a formal interview? There too I was wrong. Once clearly defined, two associations came forward to hold their own independent formats – ZANC coordinator Annahita Jasavala decided to engage the religious class students to interview their family members, while CZC coordinator Mandana Pishdadi chose to hold an interview event, where youth and elders sat around tables, their stories told and heard, simultaneously. Hormuzd Katki from ZAMWI held interviews locally, while Dinyar traveled across the globe to send us his research into our roots and what remains. The busy youth of the ZAGNY chapter posed a logistical challenge to share a single camcorder over a number of locations and places. Aanika Lal (ZAPANJ) and Farah Minwala (Las Vegas) also conducted telephone interviews.

What did we hope to gain? In asking our youth to preserve these life stories, we shared the hope that our youth can build upon the foundation of our common culture and forge their own identity with confidence.

Children of immigrants are acutely conscious of their own difference from the mainstream (usually Caucasian) children at school. Often our children will refuse to speak Gujarati or Farsi, and demand Peanut-Butter sandwiches for school lunch. However,

meeting others in their own circumstance, perhaps, brings a sense of normalcy to their situation, and they begin to feel less alone as 'outsiders'.

In time, they may recognize that each of their peers possesses a uniqueness which makes them 'different'. Our children may then gain both empathy toward others, as well as broad-mindedness, borne of confidence. Given sufficient breadth of experience, this generation gains a true international perspective, and can traverse the world, feeling equally at home in a College fraternity or sorority as in the crowded "gullis" of Mumbai.

My husband and I met just such a pair of young men last year. With some delight, we plied them with questions about their upbringing. For my husband and I, this discussion filled us with both relief and surprise. These young men were no less 'Parsi' for all that they had been raised entirely in the US. Both individuals were utterly 'their own man', uniquely distinct personalities and yet undeniably, and lovably, "Bawajis".

Challenges and opportunities

Children of Zarathushti immigrants, born in the US as US citizens, have a unique challenge, to carve out their identity. This generation also has a unique opportunity. A strong sense of identity and pride in their heritage frees youth from the narrow constraints of peer pressure and the need for peer approval. Their independence of thought is hard-won. We parents must trust that this very independence will be paired with good judgment, and that the intent that inculcated such independence of thought in our youth will be valued, and our power to persuade will remain undiminished.

One of the first Oral-History interviews brought this issue to the front. "We followed our parent's direction without question – youth today do not. They think for themselves." said one Senior, with rueful admiration. If so, aren't our youth following the mandate of Zarathushtra, who demanded that each one of us use our own reason and judgment?

"Good Words" says Kaikhosrov Irani, Prof and Dean of Philosophy, "are not platitudes- how are you, how nice you look! Good words consist of open and honest communication." With our children, more than anyone else,



communication must span the cross-generational differences of perspective.

While the Oral History Project is a small effort toward a lofty goal, I believe we are seeing foundational changes in our community. In India most people had heard of the Parsis, and one might have explained with a cursory description of our migration from Iran. In this new world, very little knowledge of the Zarathushtian religion exists, and we (and our children) must frequently define ourselves to our peers.

What changes might occur with this self-knowledge? With growing inclusiveness, our actions are more productive, more creative, and more cohesive. Associations all over North America report strong membership and growing community cohesiveness. Zarathushti philanthropy sends thousands of dollars back to aid good causes in India and Iran. Zarathushti businesses network and help each other grow through associations such as WZCC. Parents no longer feel the need to return to India to perform their child's Navjote, preferring to hold it in their adoptive country, their new home. Two Zarathushtis have stood for election in State or Federal House or Senate – perhaps you already know a youth who will be the first Zarathushti Senator! Regardless, through projects like the Oral History Project or our own efforts, if our children are better equipped to realize their potential, we will have succeeded.

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HUMANITARIAN CHOICE FOR ZARATHUSHTIS

Armaiti May

We are enjoined by Ahura Mazda to live by the principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. This includes protecting our planet, revering Nature, and looking after the well-being of our fellow humankind, especially the poor. We are also entrusted with protecting animals which, unlike our human brethren, are utterly defenseless. Following a plant-based (total vegetarian or vegan) diet demonstrates compassion to humans and animals, environmental stewardship, and respect for our health.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Bahman Ameshaspand ("Good Mind" or "Vohu Mana") overlooks animal welfare and immediately follows Ahura Mazda in the spiritual order. Every month, Bahman, Mohor, Gosh, and Ram are recognized as days of abstinence from eating flesh. Ram Yazad helps us to relish our food and as a Hamakar or helper of Bahman Ameshaspand, it follows that Ram Yazad helps in the promotion of animal welfare. Therefore, Ram Yazad would only want us to relish food which is produced without compromising animal welfare. According to the Shahnameh, flesh was initially introduced as food for humankind through the evil King Zohak. Evil Ahriman disguised himself as a cook and tempted Zohak with several dishes made of animal flesh. As a result, one evil serpent grew out of each shoulder of Zohak and meat-eating became acceptable.

Up until the 1950's, family farms raised animals for food. Animals were kept in a more natural environment and allowed to fulfill their basic natural instincts. Unfortunately, the idyllic green pastures of years past have been replaced by factory farming – windowless metal sheds, wire cages, and other confinement systems which treat individual animals like production units rather than sentient creatures.

Worldwide annually, over 50 billion cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and other farmed animals are slaughtered for their flesh. The Humane Slaughter Act is poorly enforced and excludes poultry, which comprise over 95% of animals slaughtered for food. Animals are often not properly stunned prior to being killed. Factory farmed animals are confined in small spaces that make basic movements such as turning around or stretching a limb difficult or impossible. Male calves born to dairy cows are taken from their mothers at birth and transported to veal production facilities where they are crated until slaughtered between 3 and 4 months of age. Farmed

animals are routinely castrated, branded, and dehorned without anesthesia. Egg-laying hens are crammed into battery cages so small, they cannot spread their wings. Male chicks, biologically incapable of laying eggs, are killed on their first day of life. Chickens undergo debeaking in which the tips of their beaks are seared off without anesthesia. If dogs were subjected to the abuses that farmed animals endure – mutilations, drug regimens that cause chronic pain, transport through all weather extremes, and inhumane slaughter – the perpetrators would be prosecuted for animal cruelty. Farmed animals are just as sensitive, intelligent, and capable of feeling pain as the dogs cherished as companions.

GLOBAL HUNGER

"To give to the poor is to acknowledge the sovereignty of Ahura Mazda." (Translation of last verse of Yatha Ahu Vairyo.) Zarathushtis are renowned for their generosity and willingness to help the poor and needy. Hence, the saying, "Parsi, thy name is charity." Annually, 840 million people suffer from chronic hunger. Worldwide 24,000 people die of hunger daily. Most starvation deaths are caused by inequitable distribution and inefficient use of food resources. Following a meat-centered diet contributes to world hunger because 10-20 times as much land is required for a meat-based diet compared to a plant-based diet and nearly half of the world's grains and soybeans are used as animal feed. The resultant waste of calories is so extensive that even a 10% drop in U.S. meat consumption could make sufficient food available to feed the world's starving millions. As the



Vegetarian soup and salad



Vegetarian Millen

demand for meat grows in the Western world, resources such as land and water become increasingly limited, with the result that the world's poor become increasingly unable to afford food of any kind. Increased animal agriculture exacerbates both the problems of scarcity and distribution. This is especially true of factory farming, which now dominates global meat production. Additionally, countries which traditionally consumed primarily plant-based diets are now following the Western example of having more meat-centered diets, further compounding the problem. One of the 101 Names of Ahura Mazda is **Besh-tarna**, which means "**The Reliever of all pain and suffering.**" If everyone were to eat vegetarian, we would have more than enough food to feed everyone on the planet, thus relieving much suffering. Fewer humans would suffer, and clearly, fewer animals would suffer.

GLOBAL WARMING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Factory farms produce billions of pounds of manure, polluting lakes, rivers, and drinking water daily. Farmed animals produce greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming. Global warming threatens planetary survival through destruction of wildlife habitats, flooding of coastal communities, and extreme weather conditions. According to a recent United Nations study by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), about 30-40% of total methane emissions generated by human-influenced activities comes from bovine waste. This waste also generates toxic ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, making life unbearable for neighbors of factory farms. A vegetarian diet uses less fossil fuel and is thus more energy efficient and less polluting than the average meat-based diet.

HUMAN HEALTH CONCERNS

According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA), eating a well-balanced whole-foods vegan diet that emphasizes fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains drastically reduces one's risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, hypertension, and cancers of the breast, prostate, and colon.

Here is a prayer from Fravardin Yasht, Karda 24: **Ushta-no zato athrava yo Spitamo Zarathushtro.** (At the birth of Zarathushtra, all of Nature rejoiced and exclaimed, "Blessed are we that the prophet Spitama Zarathushtra is born!") Let us follow in Zarathushtra's footsteps, and be a cause for all of Nature to rejoice!

Armaiti May, 26, a practicing veterinarian in Southern California, graduated from UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine in June 2005.

Armaiti always had an affinity for animals and as an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley, she became an advocate for animals and a vegan when she learnt of the cruelties inflicted on animals raised for food. She lives by the teachings of Zarathushtra in her daily life, and aspires one day to have her own vegan-friendly veterinary practice.



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In The News

MEHER PAVRI CROWNED *Miss India-Canada 2007*

Meher Pavri, 19, a student of Music (Vocal Performance) at the University of Western Ontario was crowned Miss India Canada 2007 on June, 30 2007 .

This pageant, started 17 years ago, promotes Indian culture within the Canadian mainstream.

The 16 contestants began the evening with a high-energy dance sequence that captivated the audience and kept them in their seats for the remainder of the evening.

Each contestant then completed the first three segments: Indian Dress, Evening Gown, and Talent. The final segment of Question & Answer involved asking each contestant a different question on stage by the panel of judges.

Miss Pavri was declared the winner.

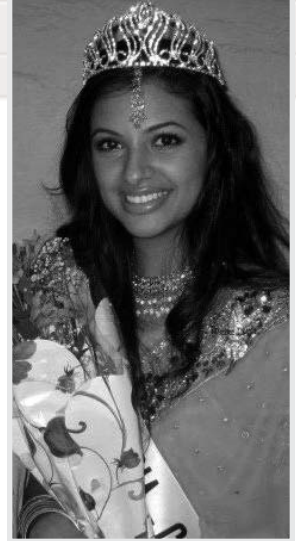


After finishing her undergraduate degree Meher plans on doing her Masters in Vocal Performance to pursue a career in Opera and private vocal teaching. She is actively involved in charitable work with the Zarathushti community of London, Ontario and wishes to further that with the title of Miss India Canada. After the pageant, Mr. Sanjay Agnihotri, CEO, remarked that this year's winner will also assist in promoting the goals of a very important organization: the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

On July 1 2007 Meher Pavri sang Mozart's Alleluja from Exultate Jubilate with the Zarathushti Symphony Orchestra at XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress Gala Dinner in Toronto

(photo above) Her rendition brought the audience to their feet.

Meher is the daughter of Russy and Dr Daisy Pavri, of London Ontario.



Shara Godiwalla, Director, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics

Publishes Important Report

On July 13, 2007 the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, a collaboration of 22 U.S. government agencies, released its annual report, ***America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007***. Shara Godiwalla, who coordinates the production of the report, stated that this year's headlines focused on "teen births and sex down." Press coverage included original broadcasts by CBS and NBC nightly news, and NPR's Marketplace as well as 19 original articles written by the Associated Press, Reuters, the Washington Post and the New York Times. Online articles were picked up by India, China, United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Canada. See ChildStats.gov

Bamboo Shoots

by Roxanne Patel Shepelavy



Bamboo Shoots on Conan Show NBC 2007. From right: Conan, Avir Mitra and Karl Sukhia with other band members photo Dana Edelson courtesy

Karl Sukhia and Avir Mitra were certain they'd lost. Their band, Bamboo Shoots, was in the top five of an MTV college band contest, but two hours after they'd expected a phone call announcing the winner, the 26-year-olds were still waiting in a friend's New York apartment. "We'd started to prepare ourselves for the worst," says Sukhia. "We figured

they called the winner first, and were eventually getting around to calling us." Then they heard a knock on the door. When they answered, mayhem ensued: Silly string. Confetti. Whistles. Cheers. All directed at them. And then a woman approached with the words the aspiring rock stars had been dreaming about for years: "Welcome to the Epic family."

At that moment, Bamboo Shoots went from obscure, struggling rock band to overnight sensation. They'd beaten 1,300 other musical acts in a contest run by MTVu, an online music channel available on college campuses, to take home an enviable prize: A \$1.5 million recording contract with major label Epic Records, which includes a new CD to be released next year, tour support and reams of publicity, from Billboard Magazine to a documentary on MTV this fall, to an appearance on Conan O'Brien, where they were introduced to a nation of late night TV watchers in May. "The crowd went pretty crazy," Sukhia recalls. "It was a thrill."

Sukhia and Mitra grew up in neighboring New Jersey towns, where they started writing music together when they were 16. (Sukhia plays bass; Mitra sings and plays guitar.) Influenced by the music of their day--Rock from Rage Against the Machine and Metallica; hip-hop from Jay-Z--they found another, more subtle strain emerging in the tunes they wrote: An Indian undercurrent, usually manifested in bhangra-like beats. "We grew up in the states, but we've always had glimpses of India and Indian culture," says Sukhia, son of Arnavaz and Diniar Sukhia. "It sunk in that that's part of us. Sometimes what we hear in our heads we realize comes from India." Mitra graduated from Brown in 2002 with plans for medical school, and Sukhia from University of Maryland a year later, with vague law school ambitions. Instead, the two moved to New York and recruited several other musicians for their band, until finally landing on their current lineup: Two other Indian Americans, Ankur Patel and Shiv Puri; and one Egyptian American, Ahmed Mahmoud. "It wasn't intentional at all," says Mitra, son of Jesmin Uranwala and Amitabha Mitra. "In fact, it's weird to us that it turned out that way."

In 2004, the band self-released its debut CD, a collection of rhythm-heavy, electronica-influenced indie rock songs. It garnered a modest following in New York and New Jersey, where Patel is a student at Middlebury College, especially after they posted some tunes on MTVu late last year. Still, they didn't even realize they were in the Best Music On Campus, contest until they learnt they'd made the top 50 in March. Soon they got notices telling them they were in the top 20, then 15, then five. The final decision was a combination of student votes and a vetting by MTV and Epic executives. "We were the weirdest band for sure," says Avir. "Musically we don't fit in: We're not emo screamo, not wearing all black. We're a hybrid."

They were, also, the only band in the contest made up of, as Mitra puts it, "all brown dudes." It was a remarkable fact not lost on the group, as they made their big TV debut in May, in front of Conan O'Brien's audience. "We were the first group with that many brown people to be on Conan's stage," Mitra says. "I thanked him for that later." Since the summer, Mitra and Sukhia have quit their temporary day jobs--as a tutor and financial consultant--to tour and record full-time. "I want to be a band that people can really respect and enjoy, even five years later," says Sukhia. "If we can manage to do that, we can have a career." Of course, as Mitra notes, even modest success will make Bamboo Shoots a groundbreaker. "We're pushing the envelope a little bit being Indian and Egyptian," he says. "We can really have an impact and influence."

Roxanne Patel Shepelavy is a freelance journalist

whose work has appeared in Glamour, Philadelphia Magazine, Self and Women's Health. She lives in Philadelphia with her husband, Dan, and their daughter, Daria.

Photo credit Trevor Dixon



In The News

DINYAR VANIA

RECEIVES 2006-07 ARTIST OF THE YEAR
AWARD FROM SYRACUSE OPERA

Dinyar Vania receiving the award from the Artistic Director-Mr. Richard McKee and the General Director, Ms. Cathryn Wolfe. Tenor Dinyar Vania earned the award for outstanding performance by a singer in a leading role as Edgardo in Lucia di Lammermoor. "His singing was "thrilling and beautiful and his entire portrayal stylish".



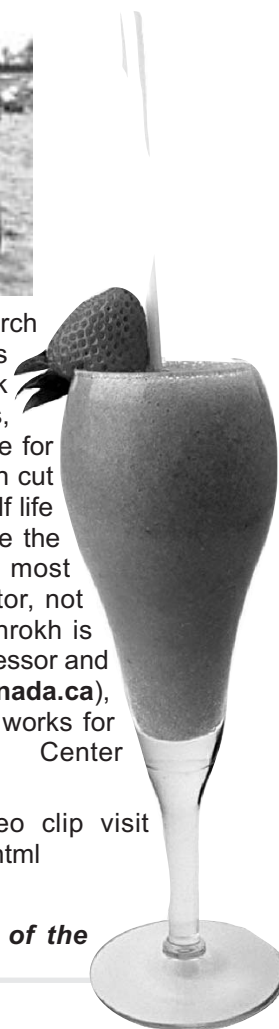
Strawberry In Summer



In the fields of Horticulture, Shahrokh Khanizadeh a plant physiologist, and a research scientist, working on genetics and physiology of fruit crops developed 8 news apples and 14 news strawberry cultivars for North American Market. He says "consumers think that all strawberry are the same. But the colour, firmness, the degree of sweetness, acidity, antioxidant and the flavour are different for each variety making them suitable for specific use." Some strawberries are very firm and keep their shape well even when cut up. They are ideal for fruit salads or freezing. There are others which have a long shelf life suitable for transportation. The type of soil that they are grown in will also influence the concentration of sweetness and acidity but the genetic background remain the most important. Once the strawberries are bought they should be kept in the refrigerator, not washed and hulled until they are about to be eaten. Shahrokh is affiliated with McGill and Laval University as assistant professor and is presently the president of Plant Canada (www.plantcanada.ca), the Federation of Canadian Horticultural Societies. He works for Agriculture and Agrifood Canada Research Center (www.khanizadeh.info).

For more information on this article and a related video clip visit http://www.radio-canada.ca/actualite/v2/lepicerie/niveau2_16192.shtml

(Shahrokh Khanizadeh, is the Graphic and Layout editor of the FEZANA JOURNAL)



In The News



Information received from Bozorg Bazgasht Association (Zarathushtrian Association of Norway) that in early June 2007, a group sedreh Pooshi (navjote) was done in Istanbul, Turkey. One year before the initiation the new initiates, from different cities in Iran were sent necessary information, books and "Avestai Bayesteh" for

them to learn before the sedreh pooshi

Kurosh Goshtasp Aryana

Mailing Address: Det Norske Zarathushtriske Trosamfunn Postboks 6688 Rodelokka, 0502 Oslo, NORWAY phone: 0047-95 75 53 06

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Edul Daver,

MPIF President and President of AcuPowder International.

LLC, Union, New Jersey, received the prestigious 'Fellow Award' from the Powder Metallurgy Association of India (PMAI).

The award was presented during the recent PMAI PM07 International Conference and 33rd Annual Technical Meeting in Noida, India by Bijoy Sarma General Secretary of PMA

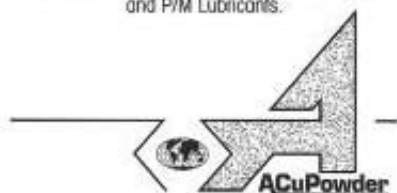


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In The News

The making of "It starts with a Z - Finding Zarathushtra

Documentary about a thirty-five hundred year voyage of one of the greatest religions. It follows Roxanne, a Zarathushti on her journey of discovery from the old world to the new. The documentary took 3 years to complete as the journeys spread from San Jose, to London to Mumbai. Roxanne took a leave of absence for four weeks to do the filming in London and India

Growing up in a small community with little exposure to my faith, I did not know much about the Zarathushti religion. The documentary's intent was to expose the Zarathushti faith to the Canadian public while allowing me to experience my culture through various journeys.

When I was initially involved in the making of the documentary, I had no previous experience in filmmaking. At times this created an overwhelming feeling within me due to all the technical processes involved with the nature of this business. From the constant glare of the camera to the many improvised interviews, I certainly faced many challenges. That being said, this has been a rewarding experience that I will never forget. Being able to attend a Zarathushti congress in San Jose and to visit India for the first time will be memories forever. It was a delight to interview Paul Kriwaczek the author of "In search of Zarathushtra." I was amazed at the knowledge he commanded over the Persian Empire. He shared his views on the Achaemenian Empire, Cyrus the Great, Darius, Alexander, and the Parthian and Sasanian Dynasty – this information helped me understand our Persian roots. My interview with Feroza Godrej was enlightening as she shared her views on the importance of being Zarathushti and keeping our identity through education and awareness. My interview with Khojeste Mistree revealed his influence on the Parsee Zarathushti community and different views, which were not always parallel with mine. whereas, my interview with Ervard Jehan Bagli provided a refreshing perspective on the future of the Zarathushti community. After three years of filming the documentary, I realized there is still a divide within the community. But, clarity has come to me through this journey as to my thoughts, beliefs and wishes towards my understanding of what it means to be a Zarathushti and to live a Zarathushti life.

Behind the scene with Roxanne Jagos

My first trip to India was a positive experience. One thing I learned is that the current perceptions of India are not necessarily what I experienced. I flew Air India from London to Mumbai with no problems. Mumbai is an amazing city. Coming from a population of 33 million in Canada, the sea of people was incredible. My taxi ride from the airport to the hotel was interesting to say the least. Nothing prepared me for the poverty in India though; it was very difficult and confusing for me, as it can be for most people who visit the country for the first time. I will never forget that despite their hardships, the people were always smiling and the hospitality was next to none. India has so much to offer, and I see so much potential. I will certainly return again to further explore this beautiful country with my family and have them experience what I did with my first trip to India. One funny thing that happened a couple of times while in India was when we were filming the documentary, often times local people thought it was a Bollywood movie being filmed. When they came close and saw our little camera crew and me in front of the camera they quickly clued in I was not a Bollywood Star!

Executive Producers - Richard Zurawski (Pal Productions) and Alberta Nokes, Vision TV. www.palsciencemedia.com

The documentary was viewed on Vision Channel TV July 2nd, (Part 1, 1 hour) and July 9th (Pat 2, 1hour)

For more information, see www.palproductions.ca web site - link Completed

Roxanne Jagosh, a 28 year old native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and a member of the Zoroastrian Association of Atlantic Canada, was recently involved in the making of the documentary "It starts with a Z: Finding Zarathushtra."

Roxanne completed her degree in psychology at Saint Mary's University, and currently works in Halifax. She is an active member of her Zarathushti community organizing social and fundraising events.



In The News

Ervad Capt Darius Mirza

awarded wings as Royal Canadian Air Force Pilot on July 20th 2007.



Born in India Darius immigrated to Canada at 18 months of age. Whilst in school in London, Ontario he joined the Air Cadets winning several scholarships and obtaining his Private Pilot's license. He then joined the Royal Military College, completed his civil engineering degree and proceeded to train as a Pilot with Canadian Forces. Darius was promoted to the rank of Captain and awarded his wings in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. Based in Trenton, Ontario, he is one of the few Canadian Forces Pilots selected to fly C-17 airplanes, the newest acquisition of transport aircrafts. Darius is the son of Ervad Tehmtan and Zenobia Mirza of London, Ontario.



Bluetooth HEADSET COMPETITION

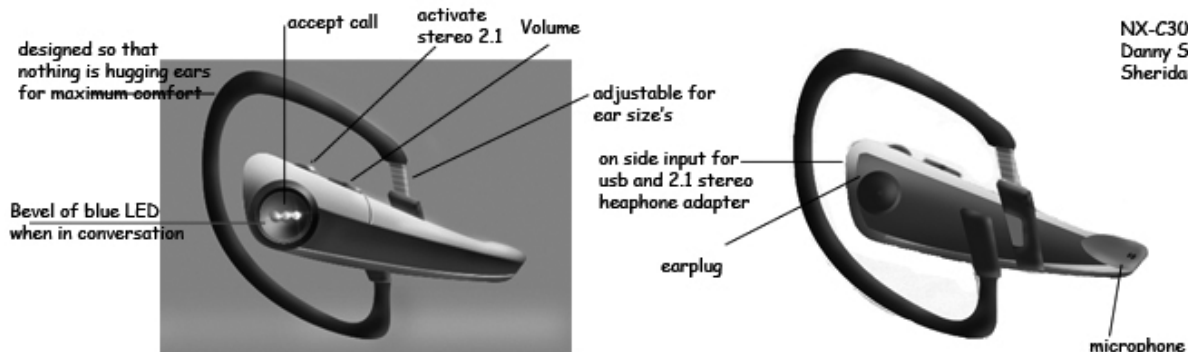
Danny Setna of Sheridan College, Oakville, Ontario, recipient of the FEZANA Performing and Creative Arts Scholarship was the winner of the international nXZEN design competition for a Bluetooth headset. Danny's design "The Titan - NX" placed him within the top ten online vote tallies and his design also won a monthly iPod prize as the Most Athletic Design. "It wasn't until I worked on this assignment that I realized I could combine the two things I love in life: drawing and electronics," said Danny Setna. "Working on this headset design really opened my eyes and I realize now that I would love a career in designing electronics. Winning the monthly prize and the

grand prize really gave me the confidence in my abilities to design consumer electronics."

Danny Setna just completed his first year of a four year degree in the animation program at Sheridan College, Oakville Campus, also known as the Harvard of Animation.

TITAN-NX

NX-C300
Danny Setna
Sheridan College



In The News

On June 7 The Women's Bond Club of New York visited the New York Stock Exchange. In honor of the occasion, Co-Presidents Maureen Kodweis and Anahaita Kotval rang The Opening BellSM. Founded in 1921, The Women's Bond Club of New York is one of the oldest professional organizations for women in finance whose mission is to be an influential community of women leaders, and aspiring leaders, dedicated to the personal and professional development of women in the financial markets.



Ontario Volunteer Awards 2007



Eight Zarathushtis Volunteers from Ontario were among several thousands honored by the Province of Ontario, Canada, for their services rendered to various volunteer organizations.

Dhun Bhaya, Pervaze Rabadi, Daulat Divecha, Behram Jam and Teenaz Javat for

their many years of service to the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, Dr Phiroz Dastoor (photo left) for his 20 years of voluntary service to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Rinavaz Vatcha and Freddy Mirza for their long years of service to Scouts Canada.

Congratulations to all the Volunteers.

BAPSI SIDHWA WINS ITALIAN LITERARY AWARD

Bapsi Sidhwa wins the XXXIII Premio Mondello 2007 for Foreign Authors for her book "Water". She joins a long list of previous winners namely Josef Brodskji, Doris Lessing, V.S. Naipaul, Günter Grass, Sheamus Heaney, Kenzaburo Oe, Octavio Paz, José Saramago, Wole Sojinka, J.M.Coetzee. The award ceremony will take place November 23 & 24 at Mondello, Palermo (Sicily).



Bapsi Sidhwa of Houston, TX born in Pakistan is well known for her collaborative work with filmmaker Deepa Mehta: Sidhwa wrote both the 1991 novel *Cracking India* which is the basis for Mehta's 1998 film *Earth* as well as the 2006 novel *Water: A Novel* which is based upon Mehta's 2005 film, *Water*.

Her previous awards include: Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Harvard (1986), Visiting Scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy, (1991) Sitara-i-Imtiaz, (1991, Pakistan's highest national honor in the arts) and Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writer's Award (1994)

Her other books: *City of Sin and Splendour: Writings on Lahore* (2006, U.S.) *Water: A Novel* (2006, U.S. and Canada) *Bapsi Sidhwa Omnibus* (2001, Pakistan) *An American Brat* (1993, U.S.; 1995, India) *Cracking India* – a New York Times Notable Book of 1991 & received the LiBerature Prize in Germany *Pakistani Bride* (1990, U.S.) *The Bride* (1982, England; 1983;1984, India) *The Crow Eaters* (1978, Pakistan; 1979 &1981, India; 1980, England; 1982, U.S.) *A Pakistani Bride* will be published in the US by Milkweed, Feb 2008

In The News

BHANDARA CHILDREN EXCEL

LIGHT OF LIFE FUND-RAISER benefiting the South Asian Task Force of Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches (A3M) held at the Heritage Park in Irvine on 7/7/07

Bhandara receives the Prestigious Mrs. Mary Velasquez character award

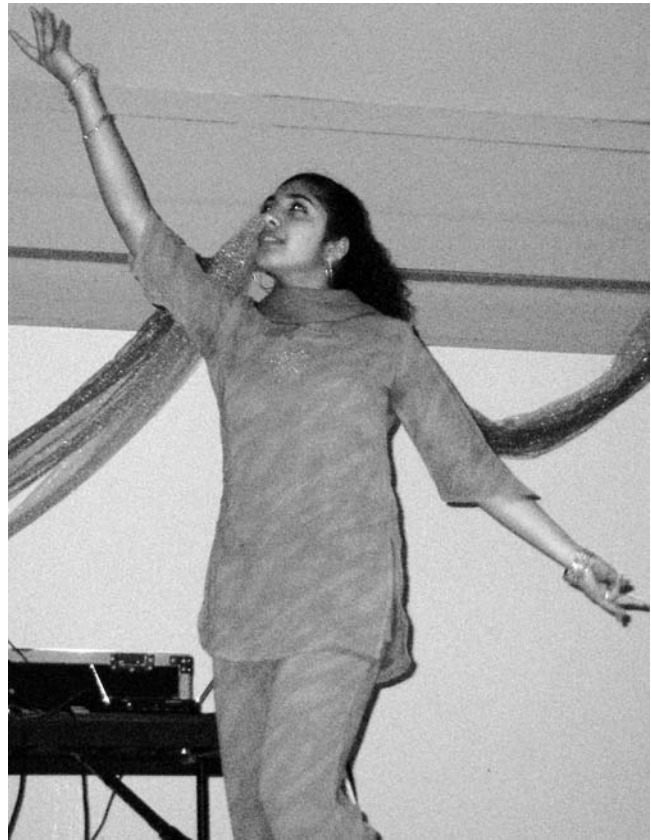
12 year old Ervad Zerkxis Bhandara, son of Teenaz and Mobed Zarrir Bhandara was the final recipient of the Mary Velasquez Annual award which was presented to him on June 18th, 2007 by Mrs. Mary Velasquez (*seated right in photo*) during a glittering function amidst all the students and faculty members at El Camino Real Elementary school. Zerkxis is the only Zarathushti child in that school

Mrs Debra Velasquez, (in white right below) a teacher at the school for over 30 years said, "A person of character is caring, trustworthy, a good citizen, responsible, respectful and kind and these are the qualities Zerkxis Bhandara has put into practice and exemplified in all walks of life and if we had more of this kind of people, this world would be a better place and we all can be a person of character. So just throw your pebble in the lake of character and watch the miracles happen."

Zerkxis is one of the young practicing priests in the Southern California Zarathushti community.

BRAVO ZERKXIS FOR BEING THE PRIDE AND JOY OF OUR COMMUNITY

Source: Meher Amalsad, Westminster, California.



"Danish Bhandara captivating the audience by her exciting dance performance to the tune of Guru".



In The News

Amazing Story of Compassion and Co-ordination for baby Ushta

by the “Next Generation” Zarathushtis of North America. Well done TEAM FEZANA.

Four and a half year old Ushta Confectioner, who had accompanied her parents to a street side sweets shop in Mumbai walked backwards and fell into a large pot of boiling milk on the floor of this store. She sustained severe 3rd degree burns on 65% of her body. The only parts not burned were from neck up and halfway below the calves. On July 3, 2007, she was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Burn Unit at the Masina Hospital, Byculla. The dedicated team of doctors at the Burn Unit provided wonderful service by stabilizing her vital organs, and giving her the first skin graft on August 11, 2007.

On hearing of this tragedy, the FEZANA Welfare committee went into operation to mobilize resources for the best treatment for this little girl. **Freyaz Shroff**, the young representative of the FEZANA Welfare committee who happened to be in Mumbai, contacted the family and coordinated a multitude of tasks, non-stop in Mumbai, assisting with visas, arranging for ambulance service to the airport, for a jeep to follow the ambulance for the luggage, special arrangements for the airport ambulance once at the airport, all with complete co-ordination and co-operation by the Air India staff in Mumbai and Newark.

In Newark they were received by Nawaz Merchant, a young mother of 2 boys, and transferred to the Medical plane which took them to Boston. In Boston they were met by Dr Jasmin Bhathena, Jamshed and Parastu Dubash, all young parents, and Aban Dhondy. Dr Jasmin rode with the child in the ambulance to the hospital.

The world responds

Nawaz Merchant of ZAGNY writes “During our ZAGNY Pateti Event on Aug 25th I made an appeal on Ushta's behalf. The very next day Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali suggested that Shriner's Burn Center for Children in Boston might treat Ushta for free. Arrangements were quickly made. A donor couple paid for the Air India tickets, for the nurse, mother and

stretcher seat for Ushta.. Funds were collected for the medical treatment for little girl worldwide, spearheaded by FEZANA.

“Ushta brought out the protective instinct in all of us, from the ambulance EMs, who ferried her from the Air India flight to the Signature flight hanger to Vasumathi, the Air India Airport manager, insisting that the ambulance drive right up to the Air India flight, so that Ushta did not have to go through an airport filled with germs to Scott Welch, the blessed pilot who agreed to fly Ushta to Boston at no cost. Ushta brought out the best in us” Nawaz Merchant

These extraordinary commitments of time, energy and resources given by the young and not so young volunteers of FEZANA prompted Dinshaw Tamboly to write

Dear Friends in FEZANA,

“I cannot help but pour out my admiration at the manner in which all you folks combined as an unbeatable winning combination of TEAMA FEZANA for the cause of USHTA, a child many of us have not seen.

The manner in which the entire campaign was planned and executed is illustrative of commitment and dedication at its very best, a display of Vohu Manah working as it should.

I have said this earlier and I unhesitatingly repeat what I have said, that the focus and fulcrum of the Zarathushti world is slowly but surely shifting from India to North America. I am convinced that the future of Zarathushtis and the Zarathushti religion is not only secure in North America but will continue to flourish as never before.

May Ahura Mazda continue to shower His choicest blessings on all you great Zarathushtis and FEZANA.

*Dinshaw K. Tamboly
Mumbai-India*

In The News

Headlines

By increasing awareness for our religion and our North American identity we are helping the people and communities around us improve their understanding for our rich heritage, culture and most importantly the issues we face. Many thanks to all who helped make our PR efforts a success, especially Tamina Davar, Roshan Rivetna, Dr. Rustom Kevala and Ervad Dr. Jehan Bagli. The coverage below is listed in chronological order.

Compiled by Jim Engineer
Public Relations Chair, FEZANA

GENERAL COVERAGE

BusinessWeek

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_33/b4046045.htm

The Last Rajah

By Pete Engardio

Special Report coverage on India's Ratan Tata

August 13, 2007

Note: One of the most comprehensive business features of Ratan Tata and his empire.

San Francisco Chronicle

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/07/11/FG9KQSF1.DTL>

'Bombay Kitchen' strikes delicious balance

By Karola Saekel

July 11, 2007

Free Republic/Associated Press

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1848784/posts>

An Old Religion Says No to Billboards

By RAMOLA TALWAR BADAM

June 12, 2007

Note: Also published in Newsday (Long Island, NY), Town Hall (Washington, D.C.) Fort Worth Star Telegram (Dallas, TX), Centre Daily Times (Centre County, PA).

The Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/photo/onassignment/iran/index.htm>

Among The Zoroastrians

May 30, 2007

Photographs by Nancy Andrews,
Interviews by Jacki Lyden

Note: A beautiful pictorial of Zoroastrians in Iran.

BBC News

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/05/middle_east_zoroastrians_in_iran/html/1.stm

In Pictures: Zoroastrians in Iran

May 17, 2007

Note: Another fascinating look at the Zoroastrians of Iran and yesteryear.

International Herald Tribune

<http://www.ihrt.com/articles/2007/05/11/opinion/edparsi.php>

Meanwhile: Lose the Vultures, and lose the soul

(Opinion) By Bachi Karkaria, Consulting editor and columnist of the Times of India

May 11, 2007

University of Chicago Chronicle

<http://chronicle.uchicago.edu/070510/zoroastrianism.shtml>

Religion historians will explore Zoroastrianism, ancient Persian religion at May 11 conference

By Josh Schonwald

May 10, 2007

CNN International

<http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=2018999502>

Crisis in Faith: Zoroastrians Today

(Opinion) CNN International's Ralitza Vassileva interviews movie producer Tenaz Dubash

March 31, 2007

SOCIAL MEDIA

YouTube

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Zoroastrians

Zoroastrians on YouTube

Comprehensive and varied clips/images on Zoroastrianism as posted on YouTube.

NEWS COVERAGE

Religion News Service: Article of the Week

<http://www.religionnews.com/ArticleofWeek032907.html>

Circulation: For over 70 years, Religion News Service® has been an authoritative source of news about religion, ethics, spirituality and moral issues and is syndicated to the world's leading religion writers.

March 29, 2007

Zoroastrians, Divided Over Conversion, Face a Shrinking Future

By Rana Rosen

The Canadian Press (CP)

Founded in 1917, sister news syndicate to the Associated Press, extending to more than 400 newspapers throughout Canada, CBC.com, AOL, Google News, Yahoo, Netscape and other prominent Internet news distribution portals.

<http://www.cbc.ca/cp/Home+Family/070628/U062806AU.html>

In The News

Headlines

Zoroastrians gather in Toronto to
'unleash the spark within'

ERIC SHACKLETON

The Canadian Press

TORONTO (Jun 29, 2007)

The Toronto Star

Circulation: 635,356

<http://www.thestar.com/article/229660>

Zoroastrians debate how to keep faith
alive

500 delegates in GTA this weekend to
tackle dwindling numbers, rate of
intermarriage

RON CSILLAG

SPECIAL TO THE STAR

June 30, 2007

National Post (Canada)

Circulation: 228,896

<http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/toronto/story.html?id=b0b27c81-9445-4fb2-904f-63bb92e610bd>

Praying for tiny religion

Zoroastrians hold congress in Toronto,
which will focus on preserving their
identity'

Rakshande Italia

June 30, 2007

The Toronto Star

Circulation: 635,356

<http://www.thestar.com/living/article/232086>

Youth, entrepreneurship are focus of
ancient faith

July 07, 2007

RAKSHANDE ITALIA

Special to the Star

NEWS RELEASES

MORE THAN 500 ZOROASTRIANS
READY TO 'IMPACT' AT 14TH
NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN

CONGRESS JUNE 29 TO JULY 2 AT
THE SHERATON PARKWAY NORTH
HOTEL IN TORONTO

Distributed to internally and externally to
religion writers at the Top 200
newspapers in North America, March 1,
2007

'IMPACT' ANNOUNCES "Call for
Musicians" TO PERFORM IN THE
THIRD SITTING OF THE WORLD
ZOROASTRIAN SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA AT 14TH ANNUAL
NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS IN
TORONTO

Distributed within the FEZANA
community March 29, 2007

ZOROASTRIANS PREPARE TO
CELEBRATE NAUROOZ

Distributed internally and externally to
religion writers at the Top 200
newspapers, March 1, 2007

AREA ZOROASTRIANS PREPARE
TO CELEBRATE NAUROOZ

Distributed internally to association
presidents and officers, and FEZANA
associate members March 1, to
promote NauRooz celebrations in local
media markets.



**Read and Send
a gift
subscription to
family and
friends**

**'No one is born hating
another person. People must
learn to hate and if they can
learn to hate, they can learn
to love, for love comes
naturally to the human heart'.
Nelson Mandela**

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Zarathushtis at the United Nations Connect * Collaborate* Change Our World

"Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All".

FEZANA sent a delegation to the 60th annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization DPI/NGO conference from 5th to 7th September 2007 at UN headquarters in New York. The topic for discussion was: "Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All".

The Zarathushti team included; Niloufer Randeria, currently at the Dorab Tata Trust, Mumbai, who raised funds internationally and traveled to Tamil Nadu, India to work with distraught fishermen and their families after the devastating tsunami which affected Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India (FJ Spring 2005 pg 13); Cyrus Cama, Pittsburg, PA who represented Zarathushti youth at deliberations on a global partnership for development at the World Bank (FJ pg 102) Houtoxi Contractor, Pittsburg, PA (see Parisana, "Zoroastrians Abroad" June 21, 2007) FEZANA Co-Chair, Welfare Committee and Homi Gandhi, Glen Rock, New Jersey, Co-chair of the FEZANA UN-NGO committee.

"Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women"

52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be held in New York at the UN in late February-early March 2008. Theme "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women". Zarathushtis interested in participating are requested to send their curriculum vitae and a letter of intent as to how they envision promoting the mission of the United Nations as individuals, to Homi Gandhi homidgandhi@gmail.com and Behram Pastakia bpastakia@aol.com

Coming Together To Work Together

In January 2007, at the "Coming Together" session held at the Dadar Parsi Colony, Athoraman hall, Mumbai, India, through the good offices of Erv Ramiyar P. Karanjia 2007, [Fezana Journal Spring 2007], FEZANA made a suggestion to the world wide Zarathushti community to affiliate with the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations, by seeking consultative status with the Economic and Social

Council. and to affirm the charity work done by them for humanity.

Zarathushti organizations interested in accomplishing this objective, and who fulfill the criteria set forth by the United Nations are encouraged to write to the convenors: Rohinton Rivetna rivetna@aol.com and Roshan Rivetna rrivetna@aol.com for guidance.

On July 2nd 2007 as the Jashan of the closing ceremony at the 14th North American Zoroastrian Congress IMPACT! was being held in Toronto, Canada, by coincidence, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Millennium Development Goals Report 2007 at the opening of the Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) 2007 session of the United Nations in Geneva

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/mdg2007->

(<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>)



This report, marks the mid-way point between the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and the 2015 target date to achieve them. The eight goals, include, among others, [see side bar] eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and reducing child mortality.

For the first time, the report's statistics show clear progress in fighting poverty. The number of the world's people living on less than a dollar a day fell from 1.25 billion in 1990 to some 980 million in 2004, despite sharp increases in total population. The percentage of children attending primary school has grown from 80% in 1991 to 88% in 2005. There has been progress on child mortality because of effective interventions against measles, diarrhea and malaria. Child malnutrition (underweight children below age of 5) has declined by one-fifth.

INTERFAITH NTERALIA

Embracing Religious Freedom: Past, Present and Future

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

North American Interfaith Conference Explores Cutting Edge Issues

At the the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Conference July 13-15 2007, Richmond, VA., Rumy Mohta, Faruk Presswalla (third and fourth from left alongside) and Sharmine Chavda of Richmond, Virginia, represented the Zarathushti faith.

The opening ceremonies held at All Saints Episcopal Church on July 13, 2007 involved celebrants from multiple faiths in a candlelight procession followed by a world peace candle lighting ceremony with prayers for peace and music.



The celebrants in order of appearance: Unitarian, Universalists, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zarathushti Deen, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Native American, African Faith, Bahai.

Faruk Presswalla presented the Zarathushti faith by reciting "Yatha Ahu Vairyo" & "Ashem Vohu" together with its English translation.

A documentary film "Three Faiths One Lord: Judaism, Christianity, Islam" was shown with a discussion with filmmaker Gerald Krell.

MANECK BHUJWALA ATTENDS INTERFAITH ACADEMY IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI



From June 13 to June 27, 2007, Maneck Bhujwala (in red checked shirt front row right) attended an Interfaith Academy held at St. Paul's School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri with approximately 50 others from various religious denominations, many of them doing religious studies to become ministers in their churches. Presenters included Jewish, Ba'hai, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Native American, and Zarathushti speakers, and various temples, mosque, Gurdwara, etc. in Kansas City area were visited.

The event was organized in collaboration by Religions for Peace-USA at the U.N.Plaza Harvard University's Pluralism Project, Hartford Seminary, Kansas City Interfaith Council, Saint Paul's School of Theology and the Henry Luce Foundation

Maneck presented the Zarathushti religion, history, culture, etc. via a brief presentations on a panel, also through a

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice

Kusti prayer service (with handouts in English), and again in small group discussions and in one-on-one discussions with individuals. He was interviewed briefly together with two other attendees by the local radio station KCUR FM.

Participants learnt about other religious denominations and their beliefs, there was a general understanding that there should be respect for all other religions, comparing positives with positives of different religions, and even if one considers one's own religion to be the best, there must be acceptance of the right of others to consider their own faith to be the best for them.

When explaining the statement in our own Jasame Avanghe Mazda, about the Mazdayasni faith being the best, etc., Maneck gave the analogy about how we may consider our own parents as the best in the world but at the same time others would consider their own parents to be the best for them, so we don't have to claim superiority over others and use that as a basis to convert others through missionary programs, etc.

The Academies brought together scholars, practitioners, and students in classroom and field activities to engage each person professionally and spiritually. CRES provided local coordination and Vern also served as a member of the faculty.

A summary of the event published in the Kansas City newspaper by

Dr. Vern Barnet (who was one of the organizers) can be read at this link: <http://www.cres.org/ifa/ifaSum.htm> which also has a recording of the KCUR radio talk show interview on the event.

Homi Dhalla speaks on “Dimensions of Peace and Violence,” in Astana, Kazakhstan at the invitation of the Government.

Presentation translated in Russian for greater dissemination.



The Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions was held on September 12-14, 2006 in Astana, Kazakhstan. As Dr. Homi Dhalla was unable to attend in 2006 he was invited by the Government of Kazakhstan to make a presentation in June 2007.

The capital city of Astana has a unique structure in the form of a large pyramid, which is called the **Palace of Peace and Accord** designed by a well-known British architect Lord Norman Foster.

As this is considered as one of the important centers of interfaith harmony today, it was only befitting that the theme of peace be discussed here. He was thus asked to make a power point presentation on “Dimensions of Peace and Violence” with 133 slides. Besides,

portraying the various forms of violence that plague the earth today, what was more relevant, interesting and informative was the constructive and positive work being done for the cause of peace in various parts of the world. He depicted the important role played by statesmen, religious leaders, artists, educationists and eminent thinkers for the cause of peace. Various members of the Government, University professors, students and the public attended the talk. After the presentation, a number of questions were asked from the audience. That evening, the National Television Service ‘Khabar’ also interviewed him on the “Role of the Zarathushti Deen in World History”. Besides this, he was asked a number of questions about the Zarathushtian tradition.

The next day he was invited by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs who informed him that this talk would be translated into Russian so that the message could be transmitted to a much larger audience. A beautiful replica of the Golden Soldier, the national symbol of Kazakhstan was presented to him as a token of their appreciation for the talk.



INTERFAITH INTERNETIAL

North American Youth Leaders Converge to Make a Difference in the Developing World

Cyrus Cama

Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, a went to school and worked in Washington, DC for several years. He recently came back from Argentina where he studied the political economy of the country and Latin American literature, taught English and Geography in the poverty-stricken suburbs of Buenos Aires, and played a lot of soccer. He is currently working as a consultant before going back to graduate school.



Urvaksh D. Patel

raised in Chicago, now lives and works in the greater Washington DC/Baltimore area, working as an analyst at an import-export trade credit risk management firm, for the company's Latin American and US buyer portfolios, and plans to return to graduate school. He has a passionate interest in youth initiatives and leadership development, and looks forward to creating more dialogue about these issues with other youth.



In an effort to engage youth from Canada and the US in a dialogue to alleviate poverty and create a sustainable future for all, the World Bank held a two day conference at its headquarters in Washington, DC on June 11th and 12th, 2007. The conference was designed to be a first step in the longer term collaboration between the youth of both countries and the World Bank.

Over 120 youth from North America gathered with World Bank staff to present ideas and discuss challenges related to global development issues. The Zarathushti community and FEZANA were represented by two members, Cyrus Cama of Pittsburgh, PA and Urvaksh Patel of Chicago, IL. As youth participants we had a rare opportunity to interact with several World Bank staff, other international development leaders, and like-minded youth on various topics including education, micro-finance, health endemics, poverty reduction, global warming, and sustainable development.

The conference provided an interesting glimpse of the challenges being faced in the developing world and the work that is being conducted to overcome it. While the World Bank presented an insightful view of its role and mission, several youth organizations also exhibited their work and ambitions to tackle the problems that confront the majority of citizens throughout the globe.

One of the most stirring aspects of the event was the World Bank's proposal to collaborate youth organizations' efforts in creating a North American Youth Development and Peace Network (YDP). The goal of an YDP network is to bring youth together to share their experiences and discuss the challenges they deem relevant to development in their countries, as well as how they can help each other in achieving common goals.

Such networks are found in many other countries, and the creation of a North American YDP network gained favor among many of the conference delegates. During the conference, we were able to engage the youth of existing YDP networks in Ghana, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela via a special videoconference. For many (including ourselves), this face-to-face interaction with youth in developing countries was one of the major highlights of the conference.

While the event only lasted two days, all participants were encouraged to continue discussions through an online group on the website TakingITGlobal (<http://www.takingitglobal.org>). Zarathushti youth who have an ardent interest in international development issues should visit the site and consider registering with the WBYOH group (groups.takingitglobal.org/wbyoh). The site provides access to conference notes, presentations, documents and other relevant information. It is also a great way to join the discussions that will impact our future in an effort to alleviate poverty and create a sustainable world for all!

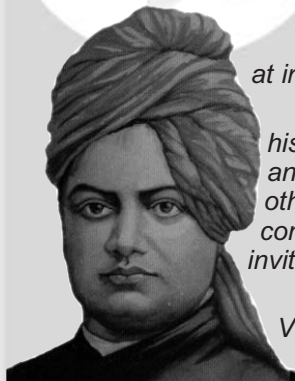
For any further queries or questions, please contact either Cyrus Cama (cyrus.cama@gmail.com) or Urvaksh Patel (urvaksh.patel@gmail.com)

Cyrus Cama & Urvaksh D. Patel

INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Vignettes of Inter-Religious Dialogues

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



From the Fall 2007 issue of FEZANA Journal, we start a new series which will appear at irregular intervals entitled **"Vignettes of Inter-Religious Dialogue."**

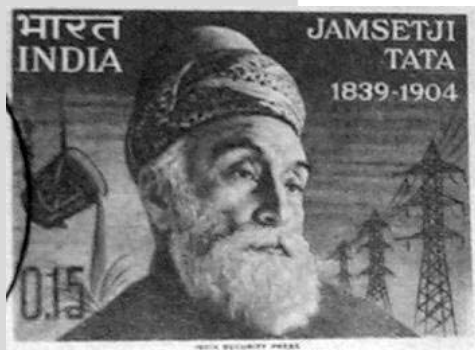
We intend to show-case contributions of Zarathushtis in the inter-religious arena through history. **"Vignettes"** is introduced to demonstrate the purpose of inter-religious dialogue — and to improve the condition of humankind on earth, through understanding, respecting "the other" and finding common ground to work together on action programs that nurture the common weal. Entries of interest to our community which fall within these parameters are invited from the readers for favour of publication (Editor Dolly Dastoor)

The first in this series is a letter written by Jamsetji N. Tata in 1898 to Swami Vivekananda, quoted by the President of India, H.E. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam* illustrating the importance of **VISIONARY**

thinking which leads to progress.

This dialogue began on a ship sailing from Japan to the USA when in response to a question from Swami Vivekananda, Jamsetji shared his vision of being on a mission to bring the steel industry to India. The dialogue gave J.N. Tata another vision, which came from Swami Vivekananda and ultimately led to the establishment of the Indian Institute of Science in 1909.

Dr Kalam goes on to share, as he writes his foreword to the book "The Earth and I"* about the Indian Institute of Science — ...This is a world class institution in various areas of physics, aerospace technology, knowledge products, bio-science and bio-technology. The results from research (done here) will have tremendous influence in improving solar cell efficiency and healthcare. The institution has also participated in space programs, defense programs and many societal missions.



*"The Earth and I"

- Published by "Foundation for Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship" 2006, New Delhi ISBN 81-903127-2-3 www.furec.org We are grateful to Homi Dhalla, President of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation for bringing this historic dialogue to our attention.

Dear Swami Vivekananda,

I trust, you remember me as a fellow-traveler on your voyage from Japan to Chicago. I very much recall at this moment your views on the growth of the ascetic spirit in India, and the duty, not of destroying, but of diverting it into useful channels.

I recall these ideas in connection with my scheme of Research Institute of Science for India, of which you have doubtless heard or read. It seems to me that no better use can be made of the ascetic spirit than the establishment of monasteries or residential halls for men dominated by this spirit, where they should live with ordinary decency, and devote their lives to the cultivation of sciences - natural and humanistic. I am of the opinion that, if such a crusade in favour of asceticism of this kind were undertaken by a competent leader, it would greatly help asceticism, science, and the good name of our common country; and I know not who would make a more fitting general of such a campaign than Vivekananda. Do you think you would care to apply yourself to the mission of galvanizing into life our traditions in this respect? Perhaps you had better begin with a fiery pamphlet rousing our people in this matter. I should cheerfully defray all the expenses of publication.

Jamsetji N Tata

23rd November 1898



With the FALL issue, the Journal will now carry a special section on the activities of North American Mobeds' Council (NAMC) with Ervad Brigadier Behram M. Panthaki as the editor. It will feature articles and talks given by our scholar mobeds, and be a forum to encourage greater exchange between the laity and the



From left Ervad Adi Unwalla, VP, NAMC, Brig. Ervad Behram M. Panthaki, Ervad Cawas Desai, Ervad Gustad M. Panthaki, Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli, President NAMC

mobeds. It will be your opportunity to get to know the mobeds in North America better. They have served us well, now it is for us to support them. (Dolly Dastoor Editor)

NAMC SEMINAR 2007 "Passage of Time and its influence on Zarathushtrian Tradition" was hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ) at Gibson House Community Centre, Marlton, NJ on May 20th with over 50 people in attendance. In his opening remarks President of ZAPANJ Porus Cooper complemented NAMC for taking the initiative of bringing their knowledge to the people by holding these seminars in different parts of the country.

The well thought out program had some very erudite presenters who have not only been serving the spiritual needs of the community but are now also fulfilling the role of religious teachers. The four well researched papers tracing the journey of the Zarathushtrian faith were

- 1 **Zarathushtrian Connection in Pishdadian and Kyanian Era --- Ervad Soli Dastur** (in the absence of Ervad Dastur, Ervad Bagli presented his paper)
- 2 **Rise of Zarathushtrian Faith in the Achaemenian Times Ervad Cawas Desai**
- 3 **Zarathushtrian Faith: Revival in Sasanian Era-- Ervad Brigadier Behram M. Panthaki**

4 **Zarathushtrian Religion and its evolution in the post exilic era in India-----Ervad Gustad M. Panthaki**

These presentations will be published in the Journal starting with the Winter Issue. They will be very useful as reference documents of our religio/historical journey.

In addition to this excellent historical feast prepared by our mobeds the TV episodes of Farohar productions *History of Iranshah Fire* was also shown. Ervad Bezan Madon, (below with Ervad Bagli) from New York one of our newer additions to the North American mobed family made a brief presentation of his experience of his training as a "navar" in Mumbai

The North American Mobeds led by Ervad Jehan Bagli who performed the closing Jashan at the XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress July 2007.

They are in alphabetical order Ervad Behram Antia; Ervad Rayomand Antia, Ervad Yazdi Antia,; Ervad Jehan Bagli; Ervad Xerxes Bagli; Ervad Firdosh Bulsara; Ervad Ferhad Bulsara; Ervad Soli Dastur, Ervad Freyhan Daruwalla; Ervad Jamshed Dhabhar; Ervad Kerman Katrak; Ervad Themton Mirza; Ervad Noshir Mirza; Ervad Gustad Panthaki; Ervad Rishad Unwalla. (Photo below)



ARTICLE IN JAINA CONVENTION BROCHURE

Ervad Brigadier Behram Maneckshah Panthaki contributed an article **TENETS OF ZOROASTRIANISM TO BRING PEACE AND HARMONY IN THE WORLD** in the souvenir brochure of the 2007 Jaina Convention.



North American Mobeds' Council

TEENAGE ZARATHUHSTI PRIESTS OF DADAR ATHORNAN MADRESSA

Neha Gohil

Like most 12-year-old boys, Rayan Dastoor watches movies, goes to school and surfs the Internet for the latest tunes by Linkin Park. But Rayan also spends five hours a day in prayer sessions and religious studies. His homework includes memorizing sacred scriptures in the ancient Persian language.



Rayan (above) is one of 30 boys enrolled in Dadar Athornan Madressa, a boarding school for future Zarathushti priests. The school, in Mumbai, India, is one of only two worldwide. Graduates, known as "mobeds," or priests, serve Zarathusti communities from Atlanta to Pakistan.

By age 14, when Rayan and his classmates are ordained as priests, they will face declining congregations and an uncertain future. Zarathushti deen a monotheistic faith thousands of years older than Islam or Christianity, was once the dominant religion across West Asia. But with interfaith marriages on the rise and orthodox priests unwilling to allow conversions to the faith, Zarathushtis have dwindled to less than 200,000 worldwide.

Nearly 25,000 live in North America, scattered from Toronto to Los Angeles. Most are Parsis, descendants of Zarathushtis who fled persecution in Iran and landed on the shores of India about 1,000 years ago. Following the three tenets of their religion—good thoughts, good words and good deeds—the few thousand faithful rebuilt what was left of their ancient traditions. Fire temples were consecrated around the state of Gujarat, where an eternal flame representing Ahura Mazda still burns 24 hours a day.

After arriving in India, Parsis began training their priests at a young age, according to Kersey Antia, a mobed in Chicago. Having lost their traditions under Arab and Greek rulers, rote memorization of the few remaining texts was "all we had to offer our priests," Antia said.

Memorization is still the focus of training at the two Parsi schools, both near Mumbai. Students spend six years learning to recite Zarathushtrian scriptures from memory in an ancient language, Avesta, that most never formally learn. "We know only a little bit about what it means," said Jamshed Sidwa, 14.

The idea, according to Ramiyar Karanjia, (below) the school's principal, is to give the boys the tools they may use later in life. Karanjia adds that there "is no compulsion for a child to enter the priesthood. First he gets educated, then he decides."

Presently, none of the nearly 100 mobeds in North America work as full-time priests. Antia, who graduated from a priest academy 55 years ago, is a busy psychologist during the week, volunteering his services as a mobed on weekends and for special occasions. He can't afford to give up his day job. "There was no way the community, despite all its trusts and organizations, could have supported us," Antia said.



Many of the schools' pupils are also aiming for jobs outside of the priesthood. Sheherazad Pavri, 12, the Dadar school's youngest ordained priest, memorized the first two books of scriptures in only two years. Still, the "child genius," as Karanjia calls him, plans to become an accountant. A quick poll of the boys yielded at least two future hotel managers, a handful of engineers, a pilot and a chef. To meet their wide-ranging interests, the school combines religious training with secular education at a nearby government school.

At both places, school uniforms include the traditional black cap worn by Zoroastrian priests. While the cap commands respect from other Parsis, non-Zoroastrian students sometimes try to knock it off, the boys complain. But they stick together for moral support. "We have a P.G. Gang in school—the Parsi Gang," Kurfegar Panthaki, 13, said laughing.

Ask them which school they prefer, and the boys excitedly point to the secular one. They have more freedom there, they say. Not to mention "there are girls there also," one boy added.

The two schools are not the only place where mobeds are trained. Because Zarathushti mobeds come from a line of priestly families, called Athornan, many of them memorize the prayers and rituals at home before



North American Mobeds' Council

TEENAGE ZARATHUHSTI PRIESTS OF DADAR ATHORNAN MADRESSA

being ordained. That is largely the way American-born priests are carrying on the family tradition.

Jehan Bagli, president of the North American Mobeds Council, teaches Athornan boys in the United States and Canada. Most of his students memorize their prayers from cassettes and CDs, so class time is used to explain the rituals, Bagli said. But there are downsides. Privately trained priests aren't required to memorize all the scriptures and rarely get the in-depth training about Parsi history, culture and language that is taught at the boarding schools.

For North American Zarathushtis, however, that may be enough. Priests' duties here are mostly limited to weddings, memorial prayers and initiation ceremonies for children, Antia explained. "There's less and less demand for higher rituals and less and less pay."

Still, the number of Western-born boys being trained as priests is increasing: In the last year, a dozen were ordained in India and returned to the United States, Bagli said. Many who are trained, though, choose never to practice. Of his own generation of mobeds from India, Bagli estimates that only 25 to 30 percent serve as priests.

To fill the gap, he now trains boys from outside priestly families as assistant mobeds (mobedyars), who perform some basic prayers. The program is popular in small Parsi communities.

Questions about this sort of broadening of traditional roles will be the biggest challenge for the next generation of mobeds, Bagli said.

On Saturday mornings, the boys at the Dadar school fill the wooden benches of their classroom for prayer class. Each student reads loudly out of a sacred book, memorizing the words as he goes along. Some lean drowsily across the large pages, the spring Mumbai heat

lulling them to sleep despite the cacophony of voices around them. A few barely make it through half a sentence before their voices crack to a shrill note. Others stare listlessly out the window.

They may be preparing to lead a new generation of Zarathushtis through an unfamiliar world, but for now, "We get prayer-bored sometimes," the teenagers admit.

Neha Singh Gohil is a journalist and a civil rights attorney based in New York City. Her work has been published in the New York Times, the Kansas City Star, the Contra Costa Times, the Young Lawyer, and the Orlando Sentinel, among others. Her areas of interest include religion, politics and international affairs reporting.

After spending two years in corporate practice with Allen & Overy LLP, Neha recently completed her Master's Degree in print journalism at Columbia University.

For the past three years, Neha has been involved with the representation of 11 Yemeni men being held at Guantanamo Bay. She currently works as Advocacy Director and Staff Attorney for the Sikh Coalition. She writes regularly for Sikhchic.com

E-mail: psg2107@columbia.edu



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

Zarathushti Youth - The Next Generation

FARAH MINWALLA

What does it mean to be a practicing Zarathushti in 2007? Have the rituals and modes of belief really changed that much from when our ancestors immigrated to America from India and other countries? Even more so, the Zarathushti youth today could not even start a conversation with an elder Zarathushti, despite having similar religious beliefs. After interviewing an elder Zarathushti for the Zoroastrian Oral History Project, I couldn't help but wonder if my life was filled with less understanding because of my young age or the city I lived in. I noticed the vast amount of culture and faith in this man's life and it amazed me that we both believed in the same three tenets and one God. The struggles that this man had endured from immigrating to the United States I would never face in today's first class or economy class cordoned off society.

However, the real question was if that hurdle over life's odyssey was better off not in my life than the contrary. Are Zarathushti youth blessed to not be subjected to their grandparent's adversities or would that, spell doom for Zarathushti baby boomers? The struggles that my grandparents dealt, with sans Blackberry Pearl molded their conviction in God and despite their lack of technology, they did not lack in spirit with Ahura Mazda. As 2007 graces our calendars, would our religion be more acceptable in 1907?

As I have many times felt my kusti poke out from under my clothes, being a Zarathushti in this big world of ours is a definite challenge. A trial in the sense of accepting that there will always be people who have never heard of a God different than Jesus and to be at peace with this presumption. It is one thing to be born a Zarathushti, but to practice this faith will be constantly tested with time. As people now rush towards life's agenda, it looks like God will one day have to be penned into a day planner to not forget His existence.

What does make me optimistic though is that not all places in the world have lost touch with their creator. On my recent trip to India, I noticed a huge dissimilarity with how the poorest of people leaned more towards God than in America where the opposite was true. Americans engrossed in poverty tend to blame God for their significant loss, but to an outsider looking directly at Mumbai's poorest, the beggar's amount of courage in the divine made them inspirational.

Maybe, we Americans should take a hint from our foreign counterparts; act more and think less. Zarathushti youth have not forgotten their crucial place in the world; it is just that we will face social criticism, that our parents due to changes in time, would have not

experienced. Zarathushti youth will one day take over the reins of our community and with this great power will come great responsibility. However, as long as Zarathushtis of all ages do not forget where we have come from, we will never forget where we are headed.

Farah Minwalla is a college freshman in New York City, pursuing a degree in

Journalism and Archeology. In future she sees herself writing for Newsweek and Rolling Stone and hopes to emphasize faith and community service throughout her articles. She hopes to see the Zarathushti community grow in all parts of the world through good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Questions and comments can be sent to PMinwalla@cox.net



Zarathushti Medical Mission

Parmis Khatibi, Pharm.D.

***'We make a LIVING by what we get.
We make a LIFE by what we give.'*** -
Anonymous

A group of volunteers in the health sciences (physicians, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, optometrists, nurses, healthcare students and all supporting personnel) embarked on a wonderful 3 day journey to Crossville, Tennessee in April 2007. The trip was organized through a group called RAMUSA (<http://www.ramusa.org>) and the zarathushtis joined them. Our purpose was to provide medical, vision, dental, and veterinary care for an underserved area of rural America. Our clinics were set in a high school that was converted to a temporary medical clinic for the weekend. Hundreds of patients were seen during this time period. (contd next page)

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

Zarathushti Medical Mission

The vision care team provided people with eye exams and eye glasses to improve their present circumstances and better see the world around them. For some, pair of eyeglasses allowed them to drive more safely, get a better job or better execute their present job. For others, reading glasses allowed them to read more comfortably or thread a needle for the first time in years.

Poor dental health is a frequently seen problem in rural America. Patients arrived with serious dental problems, often affecting their overall health. In a single visit, most of these conditions were improved. We offered emergency extractions, restorations, cleanings and fluoride treatments. Our physicians provided a great deal of general medical care.

Our pharmacists provided expert medical and pharmaceutical advice on each individual patient. They also played a tremendous role in managing and fine tuning the medical care for patients with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and pain management issues.

Our veterinarians on hand were able to assist with many vaccines for the animals that came through our clinic.

The experience was priceless and we learned the importance of camaraderie and combining all the different disciples of healthcare to improve the lives of our patients. Even though we spent 18 hour days in clinic until the very last patient was seen, it was all worth it seeing the smiles on our patient's face and their gratitude for our assistance. I look forward to going to another expedition to a different part of rural America in the near future. Thank you to the Zoroastrian Youth of North America for putting on such a wonderful event.

Dr. Parmis Khatibi is an anticoagulation/antithrombotic specialist at Univeristy of California, Irvine Medical Center and clinical adjunct professor at University of California, San Francisco School of Pharmacy.



FEZANA YOUTH AWARD WINNERS TALK WITH FARAH MINWALLA



DINSHA MISTREE

Farah: What direction do you see Zarathushti youth headed towards in the future?

Dinsha The people in our community are incredible, and the youth are especially impressive. We have youth who are excelling (or preparing to excel) in all walks of life. Personally, it is really inspirational. I think the future is bright for Zarathushti youth.

Farah: How has your Zarathushti faith influenced your volunteerism and role in society?

Dinsha: For me, the Zarathushti religion is a religion where we are supposed to search for wisdom, and we are supposed to apply that wisdom to bring about "good." The beauty is that "good"

means different things to different people, so for me, the "good" that I strive for is to make society better, both through searching for knowledge and through action.

Farah: What has inspired you to be such an outstanding leader, inside and outside of the classroom?

Dinsha: The desire to learn things that will help others and the desire to put that knowledge to practice.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....



ANAHITA DUA-

Farah What direction do you see Zarathushti youth headed towards in the future?

Anahita: In recent times, a major conscious effort has been made to unite Zarathushti youth. It is no secret that we have many great individuals amongst us, but we are

lacking when it comes to large scale activities that insist on a multi-disciplinary approach simply because of networking issues. However, the youth seem to have taken upon themselves the next step where they move as a single forceful unit into the future serving the world from all angles.

Farah How has your Zarathushti faith influenced your volunteerism and role in society?

Anahita Faith pushes a person to do things for the sake of doing them versus a tangible reward. This is the greatest influence.

Farah: What has inspired you to be such an outstanding leader, inside and outside of the classroom?

Anahita My inspiration has to have come from my parents. They are both doctors with fantastic careers and a great family life and although that is an achievement in itself, they impressed onto me that it

is not enough. Having a career and a loving family is, at the end of the day, primarily for self benefit and it is extremely important to engage in altruistic activity to truly give your life meaning. My father, for example, had the opportunity many times to take his specialized practice into a private practice and make millions but he chooses to work academically in a salaried position so he can treat the underprivileged and further his medical inventions that have transformed the lives of millions of patients. My mother managed to maintain all of us and become a super specialized endocrinologist with a flourishing practice serving many. Basically, they inspired me to be more than what is expected. Being a doctor and having a family makes your life special to you...being a doctor, having a family, and changing the world makes your life special to others.

YOUTH REFLECT ON THE CONGRESS WITH NIKAN AND FARAH



CYRUS RIVETNA - Chicago, IL.

What was your impression of the Congress?

CR Over-all, I felt the congress was very well planned. I enjoyed the

lectures, discussions, and the entertainment. The WZCC meeting was very informative and helpful, in particular the mock company start-up. The gala evening really was gala, and congratulations to the Z orchestra for putting on an outstanding show.

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

CR I did not attend any of the youth sessions. The youth events.....rather than going to a loud stinky disco where it is difficult to talk and communicate, I would prefer a venue that is conducive to getting to know each other.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

CR Yes, just being around so many other Zarathushtis infuses one with a renewed sense of pride to be a part of such a unique and distinct group of people.

Anything else in general about the Congress you would like to add?

CR It's surprising that with a large Toronto community of over 5000 Zarathushtis there were not more Torontonians in attendance. I feel that many associations encounter the same problem, of how to get the community more involved.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

YOUTH REFLECT ON THE CONGRESS WITH NIKAN AND FARAH



RITA BALAPORIA: Pittsburg, PA

Overall, the “Z-Impact” offered crafted educational sessions and memorable entertainment as well as a variety of opportunities to explore the discipline of the arts and social avenues of the city’s best attractions. For individuals who traveled to the city before, the hotel and its surroundings provided an abundance of Toronto flavors, energy and events. A conglomeration of scholars, aspiring youth, familiar faces, and new acquaintances glazed each festivity with smiles and cheery dispositions; a sight I never fail to admire among my fellow Zarathushtis. The sessions operated smoothly and the topics accompanied diversity, fervor, and depth within context. Subsequent congresses considering topics in the arts are favorable because of the diversion created off the re-visited controversial issues within the congress forum. Not underestimating the unity of ideas in forward progression, topics that assuaged tension in particular, meditation, attracted like-minded individuals towards an amazingly formulated bond. Interestingly, discussions post-congress amongst

my family members reflected spirituality from a meditation perspective and sparked a venue of unforeseen questions about the religion. At the end of the weekend, I was left with a yearning to inquire and absorb more on my own internal soul progression and positive thinking methodologies. Any congress that continues to stimulate my curiosity once the event ceases receives an A+ in my book!



NIKAN KHATIBI: Orange County, Ca.

What was your impression of the Congress?

NK: First impressions are everything. Right down to the last detail, I would say the organizing body did a good job putting together a well versed and arousing congress. Although I do understand the congress was an adult congress, I would still encourage future organizations to really reach out and put out more youth inspiring events.

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

NK In regards to the youth sessions, I found them to be fruitful – including

the many sessions that were held as well as the singles event. However, the evening events were not to my favor and I found them to lack opportunities for camaraderie building.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

NK I don’t feel anything was unleashed for me personally, however saying that, I did find a lot of the sessions to be very encouraging – especially the Titans session which was simply amazing.

Anything else in general about the Congress you would like to add?

NK I’ve always been a strong believer in building camaraderie and I encourage future organizing bodies to do the same. More round table discussion and smaller break out sessions have seemed to work wonders for bonding. At the same time, more insightful thought must go into future youth evening events. Although the congress organizers did a wonderful job putting on such wide array of events, more attendance would have been encouraging.

Youth dancing at Banquet, Congress, Toronto, .June 30th



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

YOUTH REFLECT ON THE CONGRESS WITH NIKAN AND FARAH



CYRUS CAMA, Washington, DC.

What was your impression of the Congress?

CC I thought that the Congress was well organized, and many of the sessions this year were also interesting. I liked that in addition to sessions focused on social and historical topics, there were also business development and mentoring programs for entrepreneurs and youth, two things that in my opinion were lacking in the past. Being my first Congress after many years, it was great to be among fellow Zarathushtis and meet up with old friends.

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

CC Though I didn't really attend many youth sessions, I thought that the mentoring sessions as well as the one about Zarathushti in the Film/Entertainment industry were interesting...it was nice to have something different other than the typical dating and marrying a Zarathushti type discussion that I remember in the past.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

CC The Congress just reinforced my pride in being a Zarathushti from the North American community.

Anything else in general about the Congress you would like to add?

CC Wish it was longer. Three days is barely enough time.



URVAKSH PATEL Washington, DC

What was your impression of the Congress?

UP I left the Toronto congress with a very favorable impression, and hope that it will remain a memorable event for all who were able to participate. The community did an admirable job in organizing this three-day conference, and deserves much kudos for the effort and commitment that they demonstrated in making this such a successful event.

The congress theme "Impact," seemed to have been a well-chosen moniker for what was to be achieved over the course of the event. And while much was accomplished, this congress made me believe that our community – especially its youth – has the propensity to achieve even more and make greater positive impacts in the future!

"What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

UP One of the most impact-full sessions occurred on the first day through an interesting and worthwhile discussion that ensued between congress participants and some of the business "Titans within the Zoroastrian community. Hearing their perspective and recognizing the success that they have reached in their careers, provided a very motivating experience to me as a youth. Prof. Irani's lecture on Zarathustra's vision was another

captivating session. Having talked with many youth after the session it was evident that his lecture resonated very well among the youth who attended.

Although this congress had ample opportunities for learning and sharing knowledge, perhaps its social aspect is what will be most remembered. While it would have been impressive to have had more youth attend the conference, we still had a strong representation, and made some great connections, which I hope will last a lifetime.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

UP It is always a special experience to attend these types of events and meet with other Zarathushti community members. This congress will be remembered for the events of the three days during which we met, but it is difficult to pinpoint all that it unleashed.

It provided me with an increased awareness of the religion from the sessions that I attended. It also bolstered my impetus to become more involved within our community. Mostly, the congress was an excellent opportunity to meet and network with fellow brethren. I was fortunate to expand my friend circle with those whom I met, and re-connect with those whom I had lost touch.

Anything else in general about the Congress you would like to add?

UP: It takes a tremendous amount of hard work and commitment to organize and execute a congress at this level, and I believe the organizers did a commendable job in making this a successful event. I look forward to attending more congresses in the future, and encourage all the youth to do the same.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

YOUTH REFLECT ON THE CONGRESS WITH NIKAN AND FARAH



MANTREH ATASHBAND, Toronto

What was your impression of the Congress?

MA: IMPACT was a congress unlike any other. The amount of people that attended exceeded other NA congresses and the topics for the sessions were truly unique and varied depending on an individual's interest. There was something for everyone.

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

MA: The youth programs were really geared to the youth. You could tell the organizers had included youth in their planning process. It wasn't the usual topics you see at other congress. It touched on things youth really care about, such as relationships, careers, education, etc...

The youth social events really allowed everyone to interact and form endless friendships and memories.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

MA: The congress made me more devoted to my faith and my community. I was amazed at the amount of influential people we have in our community and how much they are willing to help advance another

person's life. I realized that it doesn't matter how old you are, anyone can have an impact on someone else. Even youth can impact adults through their unique experiences.

Anything else in general about the Congress you would like to add?

MA: IMPACT has set the stage for other congresses to come. It was empowering, enlightening and memorable. I will forever cherish all the great connections I've made.



ZENOBIA TAMBOLI

What was your impression of the Congress?

ZT I enjoyed the Congress and all of the events that were planned. There were a variety of sessions which offered a learning experience for all ages. In this short time I was able to meet wonderful people with such different backgrounds and experiences. The only thing I wish was that the congress was longer!

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

ZT I thought that during this Congress the youth sessions were very informative. It was especially comforting to be in group sessions and realize that we all face similar

obstacles of being a first generation Zarathushti. The youth definitely took advantage of the evening events and it was great to see so many youth enjoying themselves and spending time together.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

ZT This congress definitely opened my eyes to the various accomplishments of the youth and inspired me to do more for my community. It is amazing to see the big hearts of our fellow Zarathushti and how they follow through with their goals.



SHIREEN CAMA, Boston, MA

The congress was very well organized, and the sessions well attended by youth and adults alike. I certainly appreciated the organizer's integration of both historic and modern manifestations of Zarathushti culture through discussions about history, art and social justice. It was wonderful to hear about what other Zarathushtis are doing to make an impact on the Zarathushti and greater world communities. And of course, I love catching up with old friends and making new ones at these events.

YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

YOUTH REFLECT ON THE CONGRESS WITH NIKAN AND FARAH



DARIUS ENGINEER, Maryland

What was your impression of the Congress?

DE: My first impression of the congress was from all the "thank you's and such. I felt very bored and thought that the congress was the past generation. However, I did like the fact that you don't have to be in a certain place at a certain time, especially if you are a youth.

What did you think of the various youth events (Including sessions and youth nights)?

DE: I thought the first youth session, painting, was childish. The other ones were better.

Did the Congress unleash anything for you?

DE: No, I just made some friends...

Laugh & Be Merry

Respect your Elders

A very self-important college freshman attending a recent football game, took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen sitting next to him why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation:

"You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one," the student said, loud enough for many of those nearby to hear. "The young people of today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel, man walking on the moon, our spaceships have visited Mars. We have nuclear energy, electric and hydrogen cars. Computers with light-speed processing.....and," pausing to take another drink of beer.

The Senior took advantage of the break in the student's litany and said, "You're right, son. We didn't have those things when we were young.....so we invented them. Now, you arrogant little collegian, what are you doing for the next generation?

The applause was resounding

Don't scoff at the wisdom of the seniors!!! ...

[Anon]

The Bathtub Test

A visitor to a mental asylum asked the Director what the criteria was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

"Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer the patient a teaspoon, a teacup or a bucket and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No," said the Director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you

want a bed near the window?"

[forwarded by Amaz Mistry, TX]



Parsi Weddings, Navjotes, and other Traditions

By Roshan Bharucha

179 Wentworth Lane Rosemont, Pa 19010

Tel 610-525-8821 bharuchar@msn.com

A step-by-step guide of how to prepare for a traditional wedding, navjote and other ceremonies including engagement, adami, aghami, etc. together with brief description of the meaning and history behind the ceremonies. A book most people would want to keep handy and pass down to the younger generation. Cost US \$8.00; Cdn \$10.00 (shipping extra) part of the proceeds donated to Zarathushti charities





مهاجر میخواد به دوستان و خانواده خود ملحق گردد و یا بعزت فرار از تخلفات و فرار از قانون و دستگیری و جرایم تقاضای پناهندگی به کشورهای دیگر را مینماید. باید بخاطر داشته باشیم صدمات مهاجرت گاهی اوقات بسیار ناراحت کننده و خطرناک میباشد. بطور مثال شخص باید تمام علائق خود را چه از نظر مالی و فامیلی و دوستان پشت سر گذارد گاهی اوقات ممکن است دوستان - فرهنگ - شبکه کاری - و ثروت خود را در کشوری بطور دایم از دست بدهد و زمانی که به کشور جدید وارد میگردد تازه مشکلات جدید شروع میگردد که خود شامل پیدا کردن کار محل زندگی قوانین جدید فرم و فرهنگ جدید زبان تکلم و مسئله مهم لهجه همه اینها دست به دست هم داده و اختلافات نژادی بوجود میآورد. بهمین دلیل اختلافات نژادی میباشد که در بعضی از کشورها مهاجرت جنبه سیاسی پیدا میکند. بحثی که در مورد تنوع فرهنگی میشود گاهی اوقات مهاجرت را مورد پشتیبانی قرار میدهند چون باعث ازدیاد جمعیت میشوند مانند نیوزیلند یا اروپا که باعث ورود عده زیادی از جوانان به کشور نیوزیلند شد. بیشترین مخالفین یا ورود مهاجرین دلایل اقتصادی آن را در نظر گرفته و هزینه سنگین مهاجرت و رقابت در بازار کار را دلیل اصلی این مخالفت میدانند. زیرا در بعضی از کشورها به کارمندان مهاجر در همان شغل از کارمندان غیر مهاجر کمتر پرداخت میگردد زیرا میدانند که مهاجرین اتحادیه ندارند. باید توجه داشت که در همه موارد مساوات برای مهاجرین وجود داشته باشد که باعث بهره برداری از مهاجرین نگردد. اساس بحث عده ای از گروها اینستکه مشاغل ملی جزئی اموال ملی است و نباید اجازه داد که خارجیان به این مشاغل ملی وارد شوند زیرا وارد شدن مهاجرین به مشاغل ملی مانند از دست دادن اموال و مالکیت ها به کشور دیگری است. بعضی ها باور دارند که باید مرزها را آزاد گذاشت و اصولاً مرزی نباید وجود داشته باشد و باور دارند بازار آزاد جهانی بدون کنترل در امر مهاجرت در دراز مدت سعادت و خوشبختی جهانی را بوجود خواهد آورد. گروه دیگری باور دارند که کنترل مرزها کاملاً اشتباه میباشد و باید به افرادی که در کشورهای فقیر زندگی مینمایند اجازه داد که به کشورهای ثروتمند بروند تا بتوانند از سطح بهتر زندگی آنان بهره گرفته و راحتتر زندگی نمایند. گروه دیگر موافق دولت جهانی میباشند و امیدوارند که بتوانند اقداماتی انجام دهند تا کشورها نتوانند ورود افراد را از مرزها ممنوع اعلام نمایند. بدان معنی که در حقیقت مرزی در دنیا وجود نداشته باشد. پشتیبانان حکومت جهانی موافق یک رفتار درست مردمی در یک کره خاکی میباشند. به امید بهترین ها برای تمامی افراد این دهکده جهانی. شاد باشید

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مهاجرت زرتشتیان



بزرگترین مهاجرتی که در کشور ایران انجام گرفت در زمان حمله تازیان به ایران بود که باعث سقوط امپراطوری ایران گردید. در آن زمان عده ایی از زرتشتیان که از نظر مالی امکانات خوبی داشتند قصد مهاجرت به کشور هندوستان را نمودند و از طریق خلیج فارس و اقیانوس هند به کشور هندوستان مهاجرت نمودند و مورد قبول دولت هندوستان قرار گرفتند و بعنوان پارسیان شهرت یافتند و این زرتشتی را بخوبی حفظ نمودند گروه دوم ایرانیانی بودند که به دلایل خاصی نمی خواستند و یا نمیتوانستند جلای میهن نمایند و با مشقات فراوان و پرداخت جزیه و تحمل هر گونه بی احترامی در مام میهن خویش (ایران) باقی ماندند و تا حد امکان به این زرتشتی وفادار ماندند. دومین مهاجرت زرتشتیان از کشور ایران از سال 1979 شروع گردید. پس از تعویض حکومت شاهنشاهی به حکومت جمهوری اسلامی فشار و ظلم و بی عدالتی به سایر ادیان و همچنین زرتشتیان آغاز گردید. عدم تساوی حقوق یکسان مانند مسلمانان عدم تساوی حقوق زنان و مردان ایجاد تبعیض در مدارس و احساس تحقیر کودکان در مدارس به دلیل زرتشتی بودن و تشویق آنان به گرویدن به دین اسلام و جلوگیری از ورود زرتشتیان به مشاغل دولتی و عدم شاغل شدن در پست های حساس و رفتار نامناسب با زرتشتیان و تحقیر زرتشتیان در مجامع عمومی باعث مهاجرت نسل جوان زرتشتی به خارج از ایران گردید. بیشتر مهاجرین ایرانی که بعد از انقلاب اسلامی به امریکا مهاجرت نمودند از طبقات بالا و ثروتمند و تحصیل کرده ایران بودند. بنابراین سطح فکر و روش زندگی آنها بیشتر شکل غربی داشته و تقریباً با فرهنگ امریکایی اشنایی داشتند و اگر مسلمان بودند روش مدرن تری از اسلام را در پیش گرفتند. بعضی از مهاجرین تعلیم و تربیت و دست یافتن به تحصیلات عالیه را یکی از دلایل اصلی مهاجرت خود میدانند. همچنین عده ایی از افراد زمانی که در یک کشور ثروتمند باز نشسته میشوند به کشورهای خوش آب و هوا و ارزانتر مهاجرت می کنند تا زندگی راحتر و بهتری داشته باشند برای مثال پازنشستگان میتوانند با پولی که از پازنشستگی خود دریافت می دارند در کشورهای ارزانتر و فقیرتر و خوش آب و هوا تریه زندگی خود ادامه دهند برای مثال افراد پازنشسته کشور انگلیس دوران پازنشستگی خودشان را بیشتر در کشورهای اسپانیا و ایتالیا می گذارند. بطور کلی باید بگویم یکی از دلایل اصلی مهاجرت ناراضی بودن افراد از رژیم و دولت کشور خویش میباشد. دلیل دیگر مهاجرت انگیزه اقتصادی دارد که در دراز مدت تبدیل به مهاجرت دایم میگردد. یکی دیگر از دلایل مهاجرت انگیزه شخصی دارد. بطور مثال

15. **Seyavash's Trial** *by* Fire

News of Rustam's tragic encounter with Sohrab made all Iranians mourners. They could not believe the tragedy that had befallen their beloved champion, Rustam. The country seemed taken over by sadness, and the great warrior did not seem himself anymore.

A few months later, one of King Kavas' wives gave birth to a son. The news was received with great joy throughout Iran. The King named the child Seyavash.

Seyavash and Rustam

All the nobles in the land came to look upon the newborn. Even Rustam came to court to view the noble infant. In a meeting with the King, Rustam congratulated the King and told him how happy he was for him.

"It is a mixed blessing, Rustam," said the King, "I am blessed with a son, but the astrologers tell me the child is cursed with an inauspicious fate. I cannot help but love him. Yet, I cannot help but wish he had been born under a better star, for as hard as his life will be for him, it will also spread tragedy elsewhere." Rustam tried to comfort the King, and asked him not to put too much weight in the words of astrologers. But even as he said this, he had his own doubts about the wellbeing of the child.

Seyavash was brought into the room so that Rustam could see him. The little prince looked tiny in the arms of the great warrior. Yet, he seemed content to be there. When he opened his eyes, the child seemed to stare straight into Rustam's face. He gazed upon the warrior's fierce countenance with no fear, and when Rustam held out his forefinger to him, the infant Prince grasped it firmly and smiled for the first time. Something tugged at Rustam's heartstrings.

"It is I who should care for the education of this lion cub," he told the King. "There is no courtier of yours more suited for the job and in all the world you will not find a better nurse for the child than I."

The King pondered Rustam's offer for a while and then agreed to have the young Prince be raised by the old warrior. And so it came to be that Rustam raised Seyavash as if he were his own son. Seyavash grew to be a noble, young man and a tremendous warrior. He came to look upon Rustam as his own father and his best friend. Their bond helped to heal the old warrior's heart and he took great pride in the young man.

Seyavash's Return to Court

When Seyavash's education was completed, Rustam brought him to the court of his father, King

SUNDAY **STORIES FROM THE** *Shahnameh*

Kavas. The young prince was the pride and joy of Iran. Everyone who saw him came to love him. He became the King's favorite, and everyone thought that very soon the old King would give up his throne and let Seyavash take his place.

But there was one person at the court who had other plans for the young prince. The King had recently married a young princess called Sudabeh. She was much younger than the King and did not love the King. She had married him only because she had been ordered to do so by her father. When she saw Seyavash, she immediately fell in love with him.

Sudabeh tried to convince Seyavash to conspire with her to kill the King. Then Seyavash would become King and she could be his Queen. But the young Prince was horrified at the thought of the cruel scheme against his father. He refused to be a part of it and told her to cleanse her mind of such evil thoughts.

When Seyavash refused her, Sudabeh was distraught. But soon her sadness turned to anger. She



decided to plot her revenge against the young Prince. Every chance she got, she levied all sorts of accusations of wrongdoing against Seyavash. Often, the young Prince was able to prove his innocence. The King began to notice this and took Sudabeh to task for her actions. But the young Queen was beautiful and she soon convinced the King of her remorse and he forgave her.

The Trial By Fire

For a while, Sudabeh did not take any further action against Seyavash. Then suddenly, she conspired with an old witch in her harem and accused Seyavash of an act so horrendous that he could not convince the King of his innocence. The King did not know whom to believe. He explained the situation to the wise men in his court and asked for their advice.

The learned men conferred with each other. Then their leader told the King, "Try one of the two of them by fire. The heavens will ensure that the innocent will not be harmed by the fire."

Torn between his love for his young son and his young wife, the King did not know who to pick for the trial by fire. Seyavash saw his father's anguish, and volunteered to undertake the trial.

On the appointed day, everyone in Iran came to see the historic trial. Women wept for the young Prince for they did not want him to undergo such a dangerous experience. Children were frightened. Men prayed to the heavens to protect the Prince, who they were sure was innocent.

Kavas' soldiers had built a bonfire as big as a mountain. Before it, was the royal tent where Kavas and his noblemen sat. The crowd did not favor the King on that day. And the King himself had a heavy heart. But finally, the King gave his signal for the trial to begin. Seyavash came before him and bowed. He wore a helmet of gold and his clothes were pure white, the color of a shroud.

Gently his father spoke, and in his face

The prince saw conscious shame and deep disgrace.

But Seyavash said, "Do not grieve, my lord,

The heavens willed all this, and rest assured

The fire will have no strength to injure me;

My innocence ensures my victory."

Then the young Prince mounted his black horse. He looked at the fire and then rode his reluctant horse towards it. Soon the flames had engulfed Seyavash and the horse and before long, no one could see the two of them in the fire.

The King could not bear to look. Hearing the anguished wailing of the crowd, Sudabeh came to the palace windows. She saw the Prince had entered the fire and prayed that he would perish there. After a few minutes a deadly silence took over the plain. Not a

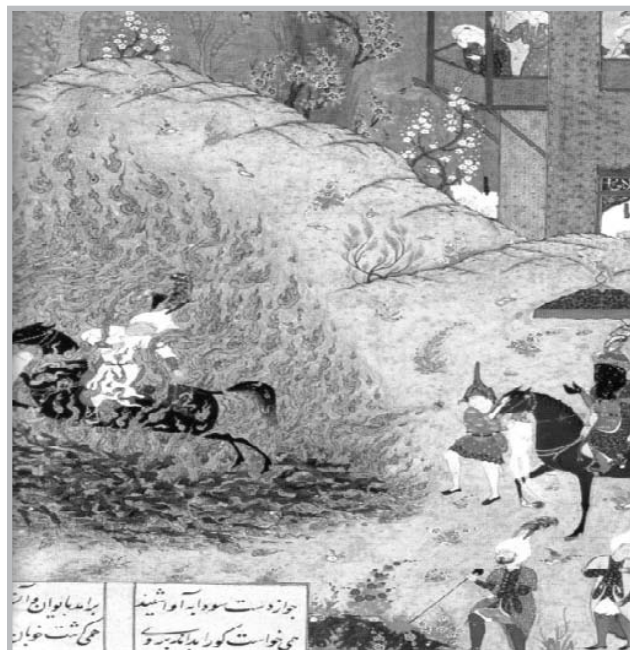
Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi lives in Marina Del Rey, CA. She writes as a hobby

The citation for the picture 1:

Sevayash Accused by Sudabeh, Painted by Abd al-Vahab c. 1520-30 / folio 163v, Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. (1970.301.23), appearing in Dick Davis (Trans.), Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Volume II (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1998), p. 14.

The citation for picture 2 :

Seyavash Accused by Sudabeh, Painted by painter c folio 166r, Courtesy of Private Collection, appearing in Dick Davis (Trans.), Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Volume II (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1998), p. 27



single eye was dry. Then suddenly, a small boy yelled, "Look! Look! The Prince has escaped the fire!"

The crowd cheered. The King looked at the fire and saw his son emerge unscathed from it. No harm had come to the innocent young Prince. Every heart who witnessed the miracle rejoiced, except for Sudabeh.

The King asked for his son's forgiveness and Seyavash readily forgave his father. They went into the palace together and the King put a royal crown upon the young man's head. Then he summoned Sudabeh and ordered her to leave his court for the outer, barren parts of his kingdom where she lived as she wished. But Seyavash could see that the King's heart was breaking even as he punished his favorite wife. So he intervened and asked the King to forgive her and let her stay.

Next time: Seyavash, the Peacemaker

¹ Dick Davis (Trans.), Fathers and Sons: Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi Volume II (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2000), p. 26.



Shahnameh Seminar at California State University, Fullerton

by **Maneck N. Bhujwala**

Background . Shahnameh, the greatest epic poetry of Iran, of 60,000 couplets written in Persian over 30 years was completed in 1010 ACE. In it Ferdowsi describes the history of the ancient Kings of Iran, starting with Kayumars and ending with Yazdegard Shehryar. According to the book, Iran's Immortal Poet Ferdowsi Toosi & His Shahnama the original name of Ferdowsi was Abul Quasim Mansur, son of Fakhrudin Ahmed, born in Toos in Khorasan (now Mashad), probably around 934 ACE, as his 1000th year birth celebrations were held in Iran in 1934.



From left Dr Touraj Daryaei, Dr Omidshah and Thomas Klammer, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences of California State University, Fullerton

The Sassanian kings Noushirwan, Khosrav Parviz and Yazdegard III had collected historical records of past rulers and Danishwar Dihqan had compiled all this in one volume called Khudainama in the time of Yaqub bin. Leith (founder of the Brazier Dynasty, 868 CE) had this Khudainama translated from Pahlavi to Persian.

There is another opinion that Abu Mansur Abdul Rezzag wishing to leave his legacy, had asked various Mobeds like Yezdandad Shapur from Sistan, Mahui Khurshid, the son of Behram from Nishapur, and Shadan, the son of Barzin from Toos to collate the manuscripts and compile the history of Iran and called it Shahnameh in A.H. 246. This is supported by Ferdowsi's own statement in Shahnameh.

On March 9, 10, and 11, 2007, I attended a seminar, titled "Shahnameh A Cultural History of Iran's National

Epic", organized by Dr Touraj Daryaei, Assistant Professor of History, at California State University, Fullerton, as part of the Rastegar Family's **Iraj Afshar Iranica Lecture Series**.

Dr. Mahmoud Omidshah was the invited speaker whose talk was titled **"The Poet and Princes: Fact and Fiction"** which corrected some false notions about Shahnameh. A 1000 years before Ferdowsi there was a vast body of Persian literature as Maneck pointed out and to which Dr Omidshah agreed that Ferdowsi showed respect for the Zarathushti religion

" Ma gooyee ke aatash parastand boodand, Parastandaye paak Yazdaan boodand "

translation " Do not say that they were worshippers of Fire, They were worshippers of the Holy Yazdaan "

On the second day in his presentation **"A Social and Ideological History of the Epic's Textual Transmission"** Dr Omidshah mentioned that long before Ferdowsi, there was a book named Shahnameh. Ferdowsi's Shahnameh contains some Arabic words because he wrote in the prevalent Persian language of that time. Maneck questioned that according to the Shahnameh of Kutar Brothers, there were several versions of the Shahnameh, because, as Ferdowsi wrote each chapter, copies were made and distributed Ferdowsi edited and rewrote some verses, hence copies of updated verses would differ from previous copies. He was asked about poet Daqiqi's contribution to the Shahnameh, and Dr. Omidshah replied that before Ferdowsi started his work, poet Daqiqi had written couple of thousand poetry couplets before he was killed by his servant.

In his presentation on the third day **"The Shahnameh and the Creation of a Persian Poetics"** he mentioned that all stories are interconnected, nothing happens in a vacuum. Maneck commented that according to the Kutar brothers Naushirwan-bin-Kobad started collecting stories of Iranian Kings, and later, Yazdegard directed Zarthushti scholar Dehqan to compile a chronological account of these stories, in the Pahlavi language. After the Arabs looted the Royal Treasury, this book was ordered to be translated into Arabic, and copies went to the people of "Habsh" and Hindustan.

A full report has been circulated on the internet.

Translations of Shahnameh (kutar Bros) appears on the internet. maneck_bhujwala@mindsprings.com

Personal Profiles

BRIGADIER ERVAD BEHRAM MANECKSHAH PANTHAKI

I was 12 years old when I decided that I would like to join the Indian Army. In the early 1950's there was a Gorkha Battalion stationed in Pune, my hometown, and I was impressed with the smartly dressed soldiers in their broad-brimmed Gorkha hats. I had my elementary education at the Cama Institute, Andheri, Mumbai and became a navar at age 11 and a maratab at 13. I completed High School from Dastoor School, Pune, and my B.Sc in Physics and Mathematics from Poona University, I passed the Services Selection Board and entered the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun in 1963 to realize my childhood dream.

I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in February 1964 and posted to the Second Battalion of the Eighth Gorkha Rifles (2/8 GR) which was deployed in Nagaland (bordering Myanmar) to combat insurgency. In 1965, as a Lieutenant, I was selected as Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to General Sam Manekshaw, Eastern Army Commander in Calcutta. I continued to serve as his Aide when he moved to Delhi in 1969 as Chief of the Indian Army and until the time he was conferred the rank of Field Marshal for his exceptional service to the country in planning and executing the military operations of 1971 which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. This tenure gave me an insight into strategic planning and decision making that led to this dénouement. As ADC to the Army Chief, I also had the opportunity to be part of military delegations to USSR and Yugoslavia, Italy, France, the UK, Nepal and Bhutan.

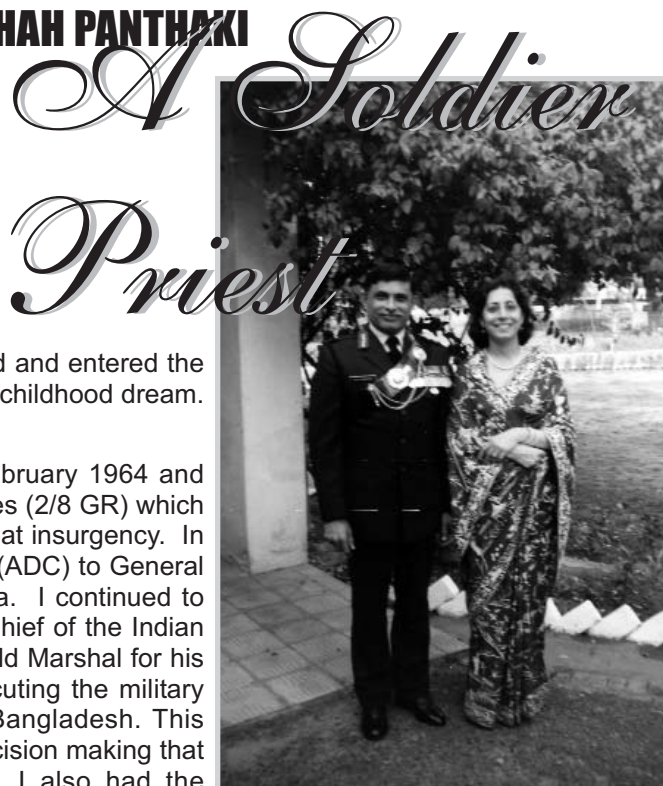
During the war I left the Chief to join my battalion in the Rajasthan Sector, but returned as ADC when the war was over. By then I was married and Zenobia and I have very happy memories of our early married days in the ADC's cottage at 4 King George's Avenue. In 1972 I accompanied the Chief and the Indian delegation to Pakistan for border delineation talks that followed the cessation of hostilities. We were hosted by the Governor of Punjab, Gulam Mustafa Khar.

During my 30 years in the Army I held various appointments. To name just a few I was an instructor at the War College, Mhow and the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington; commanded my battalion, 2/8 GR, in West Bengal, Mizoram and Jammu; was posted to Divisional HQ, Leh (Ladakh) which is responsible for operations on the Siachen Glacier, and commanded a brigade in Delhi. In May 1992 under my command, this Brigade was successfully deployed for maintenance of internal security following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Delhi remained peaceful unlike the riots that had erupted in the aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Later, the Brigade also successfully carried out its mission in counter insurgency role in the Punjab.

An Army career provides an opportunity to lead a life of honor and traditional values and exposes you to the mechanisms of governance, command and control. The salubrious surroundings of Cantonments provide a peaceful, clean environment with gracious bungalows, Clubs, Messes and the facilities for sports and recreation. Army life entails hardships of frequent transfers and separations but the camaraderie of men in uniform and support from the establishment is adequate recompense.

What motivates soldiers and officers alike to lay down their lives for their country is the honor of their Regiment. The biggest advantage of the Indian Army is its secular credentials and its a-political nature which has allowed it to become a superior fighting force as witnessed time and time again.

It was with a heavy heart that in 1994 I put in my resignation for early retirement to join my wife who had been transferred to the World Bank's Headquarters in Washington. Since 1984 she had settled in Delhi, working in their India



Personal Profiles

BRIGADIER ERVAD BEHRAM MANECKSHAH PANTHAKI

Office while my children availed of quality education in the Capital. My decision to leave was based on the priority of our children's higher education and my need to spend time with them. In retrospect this has served us well; our daughter, Freyan, has a Ph.D. in Finance from London School of Economics and is working in the field of equity derivatives research at the Deutsche Bank in New York while our son, Jehan, also a navar, has Masters Degrees in Management and International Finance and works in the financial services industry in Dubai.



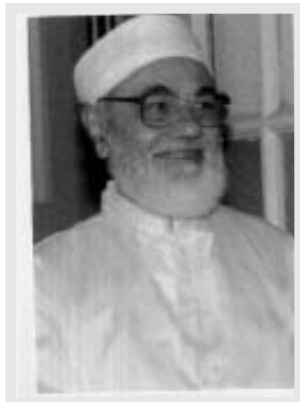
On arrival in the US I was able to offer my services to Washington Zarathushtis who did not have a priest; Ervads Adi Unwalla and Noshir Karanjia of New Jersey had filled the void for a long time, commuting from New Jersey. I have performed more jashans, navjotes, weddings and funerals in the last 13 years in Washington than I performed in 40 years in India after being ordained.

Very often I am asked how I reconcile my role as a soldier and a priest. My answer is "there is no difference; a soldier does not go to combat to desecrate and kill; he goes to battle to protect and preserve". Throughout the 30 years of my military career my guiding principal has been the motto etched on the portals of Chatwode Hall at the Indian Military Academy, ***"The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time." The same principles hold good in the practice of any profession or service."***

O B I T U A R Y

Ervad Rustomji Noshirwan Panthaki – 1917-2007

priest, teacher and a visionary with a mission.



An era came to an end on 26th of May 2007, when Ervad Rustomji Noshirwan Panthaki, born on 11th March, 1917 in Nargol in a devout priestly family, peacefully passed away into eternity.

Rustomji's name was and will always remain synonymous with the Athornan Madressa at Dadar, which he nurtured from obscurity to an internationally reputed institution. In 1924, as an eight-year old he was present at the inauguration of the Madressa Building at Parsi Colony, Dadar and was admitted to the Madressa in 1928 as a student, where apart from scriptural studies, he studied English and Iranian languages. After successfully completing his scriptural training, he underwent Navar and Maratab in Nargol in 1934, and for a year served as a priest in his hometown.

His lifelong tryst with Dadar Parsi Colony started in 1938 when he joined the Rustom Faramna Agiary as a Yozdathregar Mobed and worked there for fifteen years. In

1953 he joined the Madressa as a religious teacher, and served in that capacity for about ten years till the Madressa closed down due to financial reasons. When the Madressa re-opened in 1966 under a new management, Rustomji was the unanimous choice as its Principal.

When Rustomji took over the Madressa as the Principal, there were nine students and it was not in a good condition. It did not have basic amenities like fans and fluorescent lights. There were no funds, meals for students and recruiting of teachers was an insurmountable task. Rustomji overcame all these and several other challenges with his indomitable zeal, unlimited optimism and the greatest wealth he had - his goodwill with the Community, due to his pleasant and helpful nature.

When Rustomji retired in March 1995, he had placed the Madressa on a very firm footing with a national and international reputation. It is to his credit that a tie-up was arranged with the Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School, where scores of Madressa students receive totally free academic education year after year.

A long cherished dream of Rustomji was fulfilled when in 1990, the three storeyed Annex building of the Madressa

OBITUARY

was inaugurated. This building is a monument to the dedication and love of Rustomji for the Madressa and the priestly class. As a mark of honor to him, the Trustees requested him to inaugurate it himself as he was instrumental for this Annex right from its visualization and planning to fund-raising and completion.

In the 1950s Rustomji published three very useful books in Gujarati, two on history and one on the Zarathushti religion, all written by the former Principal of the Madressa, the late Ervad Edalji F. Madan. He also had several useful prayer books like the Yasna, Afringan and Farokhshi transliterated into English, for the present generation of English speaking "Navar" priesthood initiates. He published a small book of Nirangs for people to pray in times of difficulty.

Rustomji continued his noble service of teaching, counselling community members, right till the very end. His unique contribution to the Parsi Community in general and Parsi priesthood in particular is unparalleled in the annals of priesthood and the legacy that he has left will be cherished by the priestly class for generations.

May his noble soul attain Garothman- the Highest Heaven. May his memory be a constant source of strength and fortitude to his wife, our beloved Jalamai, and other family members.

By his student Er. Dr. Ramiyar P. Karanjia



Homi B. Minocher Homji 1913- 2007

The first VP of FEZANA

courses. They got married in December 1946.

With the formation of Pakistan in 1947, Homi joined the Government of Pakistan and was heavily involved in the Village Aid Program, which required long and strenuous fieldwork. Later he was offered a senior position with the UN's Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, (ECAFE/ESCAP) in Bangkok where he worked for 15 years and retired in 1977 as Chief of the Social Affairs Division.

Both Homi and Villie were excellent tennis players winning many titles and championships. They were gracious hosts, actively involved in the foreign embassy social circuit in Bangkok. Their house was always open to visitors.

Homi's greatest desire after retiring was to serve the Zarathushti Community, wanting to give back more than what he had received over the years. While in Karachi he authored two books and was deeply involved in organizational and social work with the community. His book "O Wither Parsis" dedicated to wife Villie is a blueprint for the survival of the community as envisaged by him. In 1980 Homi and Villie immigrated to Canada where son Kavasji and daughter Coombi lived. Daughter Rashna lived in England.

Homi served as President of the ZSO, headed the Long Term

Planning Committee and served on the Religious Sub Committee. He provided valuable input for the Zoroastrian scouts and guides program, the writing of funeral procedures in North America and was a founding member of the Hormuzd Club in Toronto. He was actively involved in the formation of FEZANA and served four terms as its Vice President. His book, the Pocket Avesta is an outstanding example of his contribution to the community

A qualified priest by lineage, he indeed let his life be his message. He was a shining example of a Zarathushti role model. He was loving, affectionate and tolerant as a father, firm but patient and compassionate to people he worked with. Although always mindful of his actions and sensitive to the effect they had on others, he seldom if ever compromised on the Truth and the principles he lived his life by. He presented his views and let others choose to accept or reject them.

Homi and Villie celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on December 15, 2006 with a few close friends and family. Homi enjoyed a full and healthy life of 94 years and passed on quietly on May 31, 2007. May his soul rest in eternal peace

Kavasji H. Homji/Putli Mirza

Homi was born in Karachi, the third of three children of Bomanshaw and Cooverbai Minocher Homji. Soon after Homi's birth, the family moved to Peshawar in the NWFP where Homi's father operated a petroleum distribution business. He was the major donor of the Minocher Homji Parsee Hospital in Karachi and his mother was the daughter of Sir Kavasji Katrak, a successful businessman, philanthropist and Mayor of Karachi.

When Homi was twelve, the family moved back permanently to Karachi. Homi studied at the BVS Parsi School completed his Matriculation standing first in his class and went on to do his BA from Bombay University. He started his career in his grandfather's business and later joined the Ordinance Services with the British Govt. of India. Around this time, he met Villie at one of the sports meets they both participated in. Thus began a courtship of almost a decade while he continued to take job related

M I L E S T O N E S as of AUGUST 15, 2007

BIRTHS

Zane Commissariat, a boy, to Diana and Xerxes Commissariat, grandson to Aban and Nauzer Commissariat (Karachi, Pakistan) and to Shireen and Dinyar Irani (Irvine, CA) in CA on December 22, 2006.

Anjali Patel, a daughter to Elvia and Ronnie Patel in Houston, TX on March 27, 2007. Photo below



Luca Sarosh Motivala, a boy, to Shireen and Sarosh Motivala, grandson to Aban and Parvez Commissariat and Roshan and late Jijoo Motivala in Los Angeles, CA on April 10, 2007

Danika Xerxes Surkari, a girl, to Xerxes and Jasmine Surkari, granddaughter to Eruch and Katy Surkari and Aspi and late Katy Sapurji, niece to Zubin Surkari and Sunaya Sapurji in Toronto, ONT on April 16, 2007

Burzina Mashya Amroliwalla, a girl, to Dina and Mashya Amroliwalla, sister to Jia in Toronto, ONT on April 20, 2007

Cyrus Burzin Bharucha, a boy, to Parvana and Burzin Bharucha in Mississauga, ONT on April 25, 2007.

Zia Mehta, a girl, to Sanobar and Hector Mehta, sister to Shireen in San Jose, CA on May 4, 2007.

Zubin Saher, a boy, to Kamal and Sarosh Saher, grandson to Shirin and Viraf Kanga and Amy and Bahadur Saher on May 23 (ZAC, Chicago)

Ashdin Mahyar Hansotia, a boy, to Mahyar and Nazneen Hansotia, grandson

to Shiraz and Kersi Hansotia (Mississauga, ONT) and Yasmin and Cherag Bamboat (Mumbai) in Mississauga, ONT on June 11, 2007.

Ashdin Ryan, a boy to Aseena (Shroff) and Damon Kade, grandson to Ava and Jehangir Shroff in Houston, on August 2, 2007

Minoo (avestan Paradise) Noruziaan, daughter to Anahita and Bahman Noruziaan, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on August 5, 2007.

NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

Afshan and Anaiza Irani children of Delnaaz and Spenta Irani (Dallas, TX) were initiated into the Zarathushti faith in Mumbai, India on June 4, 2006.

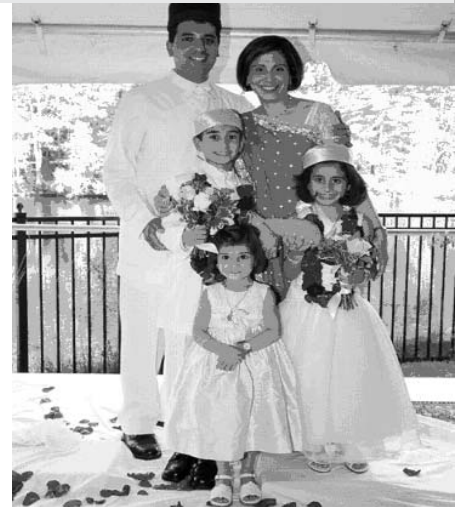
Sean Chor, son of Shahnaz and Sharukh Chor, grandson of Khurshed and (late) Navaz Tengra in Boise, Idaho on May 27, 2007.

Zaal Farhad Panthaky, son of Farhad and Firoza Panthaky (Norwood, MA) was initiated into the religion by his dad Farhad, his grandfather Dadi (Pune, India), his "grandmasa" grand uncle Kersi Nalladaru (Surat, India), and "mama" uncle Yezad (Boston, MA) and cousin Farhan (Toronto, ONT) in Foxboro, MA on June 10, 2007.

Rohann Gazdar, son of Adil and Prochi Gazdar, grandson of Homai and Homi Gazdar (Toronto, ONT) and Perin and late Naval Sukheshvala (Mumbai) in Markham, ONT on July 20, 2007..

Jehan Iranpur, son of Meher and Mehernosh Iranpur, in Montreal, Que on July 21, 2007.

Ryan Kavanaugh, son of Firooza Palkhiwala, grandson of Hutoxi and late Dara Palkhiwala, in Mississauga, ONT on August 11, 2007



Darian and Zenia Bhathena (ZAGBA) (photo above) had worked very hard to prepare for their initiation into the Zarathushti faith, and were very happy and honored to have over two hundred family members and close friends share in this special occasion. Ervads Kersasp Nalladaru (from Surat, India) and Farhad Panthaki (from Norwood, MA) presided over the ceremony, with support from Ervads Nauzar Vimadalal, Yezad Nalladaru and Cyrus Karkaria. A very special day was made even more memorable because the ceremony and festivities were held at the home in Andover, MA on May 26 2007 where Darian and Zenia have grown up with their baby sister Myra.

WEDDINGS

Jehan Rivetna, daughter of Dinsoo and Dara Rivetna (Chicago, IL) to Christopher Bell on May 5, 2007.

Kureshaan Karanjia, daughter of Zarin and Nariosang Karanjia (Chicago, IL) to Oscar Roman in Puerto Rico on May 12, 2007.

Farhang Burjor Irani, son of Perin and late Burjor Sohrab Irani to Mahin Jamshed Irani, daughter of Zenobia and Jamshed Irani (London, UK) in Ajax, ONT on May 20, 2007.

Laila Contractor, daughter of Hutoxi and Farhad Contractor (Pittsburg, PA) to Homi Bodhanwalla, son of



Viraf and Dolat Bodhanwalla (CA) in Pittsburgh, PA on May 26.2007. Homi is a Software Engineer and Laila is finishing her Fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, making her the 5th generation doctor in a family tradition

Adil Toddywalla, son of Roda and late Rusi Toddywalla, to Yasodah, daughter of Rasammah and Sivagnanalingam in Chicago, IL on June 18. 2007.

Natasha daughter of Roshan and Rustom Mehdibadi to Cyrus, son of Farida Wadia and Dara Jilla, in Houston, TX, June 23, 2007.

Riyaz Deshmukh, son of Rustom and Maharookh Deshmukh to Jennifer Brooke Shragge, daughter of Clive and Heather Shragge in Vancouver, B.C on June 30, 2007

Padra Farhangi, son of Goli and the late Mehraban Farhangi to Sarah Rebecca Waite in Vancouver, B.C. on July 7.2007

Sam Bharda to Maria Szabados in Mississauga, ONT on July 14, 2007.

Edul Dinyar Nakra to Helena Palacios Fernandez in Glen Magna Farms, MA on July 21, 2007.

Anahita Dara Palkhiwalla, daughter Hooty Dara Palkhiwala to Drew James Keiller, son of Helen Sargent, in Montreal, QUE on July 27, 2007.

Yohann Gazdar, son of Niloufer and Nauzer Gazdar (Toronto, ONT) to Sheila Bapooji, daughter of Mahrukh and Aspy Bapooji (Lime house, ONT) in Mississauga, ONT on July 28, 2007

DEATHS

Rusi Panthaky, husband of Freny Panthaky, father of Hira, Zarir, Binaisha and Kayan Todiwalla (Chicago, IL) in Mumbai, India on March 19, .2007

Dhun Mehta, 84, father of Sarver Ardeshir Minwala, Yazdi and Mahiyar, brother of Rathi (Freny), Aloo and Zamrud Mehta, (London UK), brother-in-law of Piroj and Freddy Amrolia and Nanu and Zarine Dastur (Vancouver, BC) in Burnaby, BC on March 21, 2007

Daulat ("Dolly aunty") Boman Bastani, 82, wife of late Boman Rustom Bastani mother of



Dr.Jehangir and Shoba Bastani (Phoenix, AZ), late Katayun Bastani (Pune, India), Roshan and Kersi Pajnigar (Lincoln, NE), Meherangish Gezerlis (Athens, Greece), late Rusi and Gooli Bastani (Teheran, Iran), Faroukh and Sharda Bastani (Jersey City, NJ), and grandmother of Ashesh Bastani Troester and Zuben J. Bastani, Dr.Arman and Dr.Zahir K.Pajnigar, Spiros and Alex B.Gezerlis, Rokshana Bastani, Jahanisepeh and Aarti F.Bastani in Pune, India on March 28th, 2007.

Vira Ferozshaw Billimoria, 83, mother of Ruby Khan in Modesto, CA on May 5. 2007.

Dr. Ervad Naval F. Desai, 87, husband of Aloo Desai, father of Faredon (Bakhtavar), Veera (Burjor) Suntoke, grandfather of Hanoz,

Mahfrin, Shireen, Havovi and Farah in Fairfield, OH on May 17. 2007

Parvez Khandhadia, husband of Manijeh Khandhadia, father of Tina and Babak, brother of Kersi, Dadi and Marzban in Thornhill, ONT on May 14. 2007.

Noshir Behram Kolah, father of Darayus Kolah (Houston, TX) in Mumbai, India on May 19. 2007.

Gulshan Rustomji Masani, 84, mother of Adil Masani on May 19. 2007 (ZAPANJ).

Keki Bomanji Vania, 91, father of Roshan Burjor Davar, Maki Len Trumble and Phil Vania, and grandfather of Shaina, Kyle and Diana (Toronto, ONT) in Mumbai on May 22, 2007.

Sehra Mehta, 84, mother of Hufritz Darayus Mavalvalla, sister of Thrity Ghadiali, and grandmother of Zain and Manek, in Richmond, BC on May 25, 2007.

Rustomji Noshirwan Panthaki, 90, husband of Jalamai, brother of late Dinyar, Gustad, Jehangir, Perin, Manijeh Dhunjishaw Gamir (Ahmedabad) Jeroo Rustom Nargolwala (Mumbai), and Jal (Meher) of Toronto, ex-principal of the Dadar Athornan Madressa for over 40 years. Many of the North American mobeds have trained under his leadership, in Mumbai on May 26, 2007.

Dr. Iradj Pourkarimi 82, husband of Azar Pourkarimi, father of Bijan and Behzad, in North Vancouver, BC, on May 31, 2007.

Homi Homji, husband of Villi Homji, father of Rashna, Coombi and Kavasji, father-in-law of Stephen,Darius and Doris in Toronto, ONT on May 31. 2007

Minoo Hormusji Sethna, husband of Nargis Sethna, father of Dilnavaz

Rustomji (Lewisville, TX), Rashna Sethna, Ardeshir Sethna and Kaizad Sethna in Karachi, Pakistan on June 10, 2007.

Burjor Bhesania, husband of Roshan Bhesania, father of late Thrity Patel and Shernaz Bhesania, brother of Khorshed Burjor Dastoor (UK) in Prince Rupert, BC on June 16, 2007.

Mahin Goshtasbi, wife of Zivar Ziatabari, sister of Dr. Jamshid Goshtasbi (ZAMWI) in Kerman, Iran on June 18, 2007.

Amy Lovji Tengra, mother of Philli, Savi and Hormuz in Karachi, Pakistan on July 2, 2007.

Farangis Farhadieh, mother of Bahram (Mahnaz) Farhadieh (Chicago, IL), Ruyintan (Tira)

Farhadieh (Chicago, IL) and Tehmina Nikfar.

Rohinton Cooverji Sethna, 68, husband of Pheroza (Pinky) father of Zaab and Shawn, daughter Zara and son-in-law, Stefan, in University Place, Florida, on Roj Khordad, Mah Behman, 1376 Y.Z. Shehenshahi, June 21, 2007

Ervad Darabshaw Bhadha, 76, of Karachi husband of Kaity, father of Ashees Farobag Cooper of Chicago and Khushnuma Dinyar Engineer of Karachi. Grandfather to Shahan and Anushe. on June 22, 2007.

Jamshyde Cama, 88, son of Jal and Jerbanu Cama, of Montreal, in Pune, India on August 6, 2007.

Khorshed Bhavnagri, 81, wife of the late Rumi Bhavnagri, mother of late

Vispi and Rattoo Bhavnagri, in North Vancouver, B.C. on August 13, 2007.

Homi P. Kalianivala husband of Maneck, father of Zarir, (Nina), daughter Niloufer Nauzer Gazdar, granddaughters Anahita (Texas) Sanaeya (Mahiyar), grandson Yohann (Shiela) in Toronto, Canada, in Fort Worth, Texas on August 13, 2007.

Rutiey Homi Ghadiali, 97, wife of Homi, mother of Sylloo (Jimmy) Bharucha, Jimmy (Roshan) Ghadiali of Montreal, grandmother of Sherry Bharucha, Delna Sorabji (Calgary) Carmin Ghadiali (Montreal) and great grand-mother of Aiden Sorabji,(Calgary) in Mumbai on August 14, 2007.

Matrimonials

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna@rrrivetna@aol.com.

Parsi girl, 36, 5' 1", well-settled in USA with Master's degree in Social work. Brother invites correspondence from well settled 36 to 42 year old Parsee men in North America. Please email your photo and particulars to kbadhas@gmail.com. [F07-08].

Male, 35, 5' 6", B.Sc. (Physics) from Bombay University, Diploma in Software Technology from NCST, Bombay, working in USA since 2000. Contact ruzhere@yahoo.com. [M07-09].

Male, 27, 5' 11", licensed CPA, with Masters in Business Administration in accounting and information systems from Colorado State University. I plan to make Colorado my permanent residence. Interested in meeting educated, independent and adventurous Zarathuhsti women. Contact 970-690-1423. [M07-12].

Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services,
<http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com> -
www.TheParsiMatch.com

www.shaadi.com,

Mrs Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai
goolpesi@gmail.com,

Mrs Serah Kotval, Dadar, Mumbai

Tel 91 22 2142 3570

Please send all submissions for
"Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram,
2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield,
WI 53045, mmotafram@msn.com,
Tel: 262-821-5296. NOTE: If no
year is specified, it implies "within
the past 12 months."

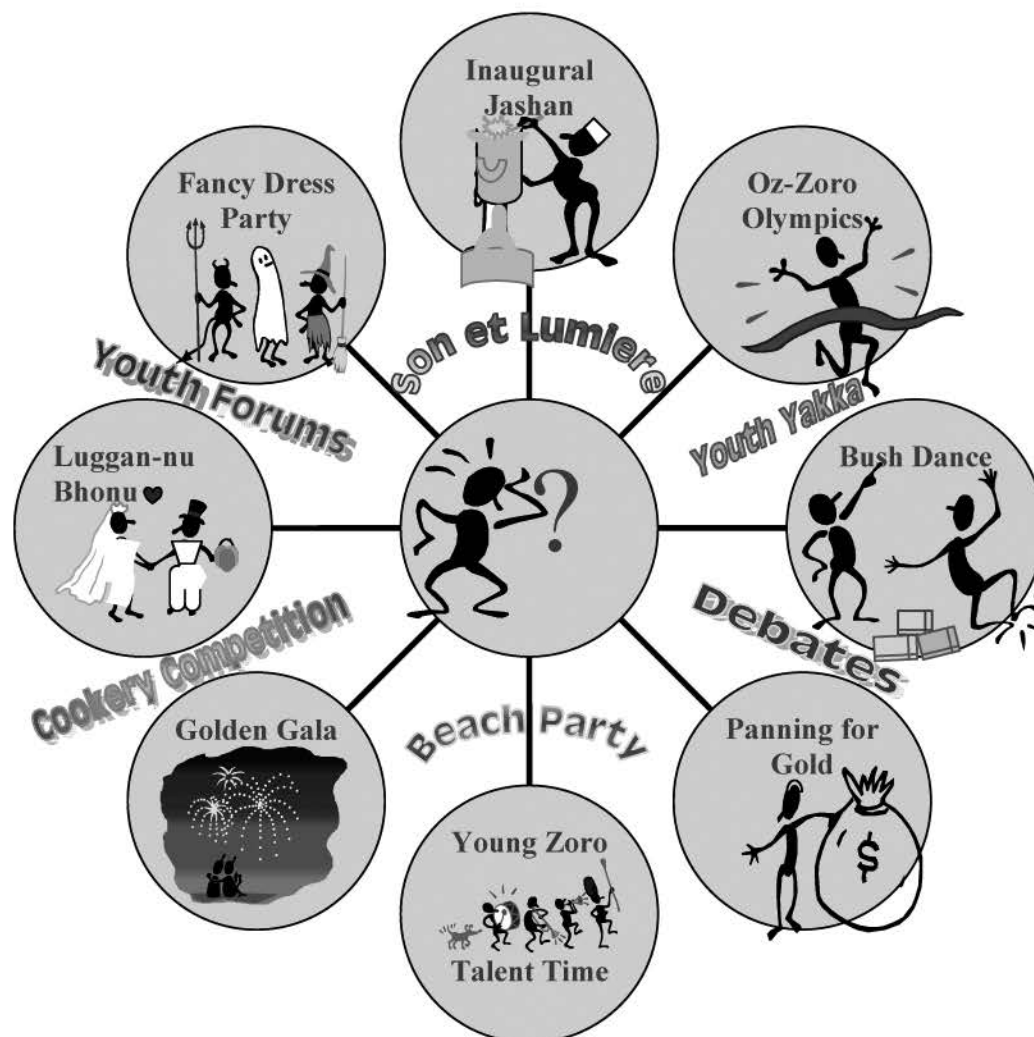


The Fourth World Zoroastrian Youth Congress ~ University of Ballarat, Vic. Australia

So many things to do, places to go, people to meet ...

& YOU DON'T HAVE A THING TO WEAR???

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“Come-as-you-are” is NOT an option, when we must always

“DRESS TO IMPRESS!”

“For the apparel oft proclaims the man!” (~ Who else but Shakespeare!)

So please don't put on your Top Hat & Tails or don a Golden Gala Ball Gown to pan for gold, or wear a hard hat to the Jashan!

Well, just think along these lines for starters ~ there's so much more to come!

Preserve, Practice, Perpetuate.

S. J. Mistry, “Ushta Tai,” 11 Tamarisk Avenue, Glen Waverley, VIC – 3150, Australia.

Telephone: ++ 61 3 9562 0543.

Email: chairman@4wzyc.org

The 4thWZYC Inc. A0049539Y

Website: <http://www.4wzyc.org>

ABN 57 817 377 043



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS DAY- XIV NORTH AMERICAN ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

IMPACT-UNLEASH THE SPARK WITHIN

JUNE 29th 2007



Andrew Reid and Erika Bailey from Big Fish started the business day with a stimulating simulation game entitled “sink or swim”. Each table in the room was a “company” in the aerospace industry and the idea was to launch a product or service from inception to full globalization (if you had the gumption for it). The idea/niche selected for the game was space travel. Each company then went through 12 days worth of events/instructions simulating everything from economic indicators affecting the price of aluminum to dealing with “the banker” and of course the constant fear of making ends meet. The room was soon buzzing with excitement and before we could say ‘Richard Branson’ – one team had merged with 4 other teams to become a powerhouse in the field of space travel. (Photo left) With a little help from Sir Richard aka Sam Meer and of course the “market” aka Andrew Reid, the reality of starting a company and the trials, tribulations and the rewards associated with it – was brought to life for a couple of hours. At the end of the session, it was not so important who was the largest company or who went bankrupt – but what each individual learned about themselves not only as an entrepreneur but also as a

person. Most people agreed that thinking outside the box pays great dividends even though for some it is a foreign concept. The other nugget gleaned from the session was that if you want something then ask for it – don’t wait for someone else to give it to you.

As Global President of the WZCC, Bomy Boyce, a driving force behind expanding the reach of the WZCC, is in the process of integrating the Business Cell within North America. After a successful introduction in Mumbai, the WZCC is aiming to promote this idea and is looking for people who think outside the box. The Business Cell will help grow businesses or ideas into successful businesses. The cell will comprise of a group of individuals who are able to give guidance and advice to fledgling entrepreneurs. The indicator of success for the Business Cells in each chapter will be the number of businesses started over the next 3 years. Given the recent success stories in India, there is every reason to believe that this idea will take off in the local North American chapters. The Global WZCC urges local chapter chairs to make connections to the ‘outside’ world to determine what other groups are doing and to help evolve the Business Cells globally. For more information on the Business Cell, visit www.wzcc.net.

In line with Bomy’s vision, Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz discussed building the spirit of entrepreneurship within the community. She encouraged everyone looking to start their business to choose a buddy or mentor, and build on Rohinton Rivetna’s original vision for WZCC ---a professional community where everyone is supporting everyone else. By focusing on helping others, we make ourselves successful.

Zareen encouraged people to take advantage of the online business support groups including our own Z-Chamber network. To subscribe to this forum email, zchamber-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Contact Zareen, at zareen@managingcultures.com.



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce



From left Zareen Karani Araoz, Sam Meer (president WZCC Toronto Chapter Minoo Shroff, Chairman, Bombay Parsi Punchayat, Bomy Boyce. President WZCC Armaity Bamji.

For additional information on Indian entrepreneurship, visit www.usibc.com - US India Business Counsel or www.tie.org the Indus Entrepreneur.

Minoo Shroff and Viloo Shroff were honored guests from Mumbai where there is a vibrant WZCC community and chapter with an office and a full-time secretary. The group meets once a month for 2-3 hours to focus on how to encourage young people to become entrepreneurs. One of the goals is to form a cell of young budding entrepreneurs. Minoo's talk may have sparked a passion in a few young attendees of the congress and we hope they take his words to heart.

In keeping with the vision of encouraging budding entrepreneurs, Xerxes Wania promoted the first Zoroastrian Business Contest 2007. Now anyone living in Ontario has the chance to achieve their dream of opening their own business. No idea is too big or too small. For more information, visit www.wzcc.net and click on the link for the business contest. Good luck to all!!

The day ended with an exciting session on personal growth and achieving excellence hosted by Professor Steven Gideon from Ryerson University. Professor Gideon encourages everyone to surround themselves with great people and many times the path to success is not through added technology but rather through people. He encouraged us to think about our own sense of accomplishments and to recognize that we are responsible for our own happiness.

Reporter Armaity Bamji



WZCC

LET'S GET INTO BUSINESS AN INTERACTIVE SESSION



An enthusiastic crowd of over 135 attendees gathered at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Center, Houston on June 24, 2007 to listen to two young entrepreneurs and a young professional describe their struggles, hopes and aspirations in pursuit of success. It was the first ever event organized by WZCC to honor and recognize our youth. It was a joint event organized by the Houston and the Dallas chapters of WZCC. Thanks to the hardworking members of the Executive Committee, the event was a real success.

The president of the Houston Chapter, Mrs. Behroze Daruwalla (photo above) and the International WZCC Director and President of the Dallas Chapter, Mr. Firdosh Mehta, welcomed the attendees. Mr. Rustom Engineer introduced Mrs. Zarine Commissariat, an International Director and the Secretary of the Board from Mumbai who was visiting Houston. Mrs. Commissariat has been master of ceremony at countless events where celebrities like Dalai Lama, Royalty of Brunei, Bollywood stars, etc. were chief guests. She has played prominent roles at many national and international events organized by the Asian Secretaries & Administration Professionals; the Lion's Club and also has anchored many television programs.



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce



WZCC



WZCC



Mrs. Commissariat (left top) very eloquently delivered a talk on **"A World Perspective on the WZCC"**. Starting with the success of the two WZCC delegations to Dubai and Iran, she highlighted some of the up and coming programs that the WZCC Executive Committee headed by the Chairperson Mr. Bomi Boyce is currently working on. The talk was followed by some interesting questions and answers.

Our first young entrepreneur **Neville Medhora** (left middle) whose exploits have been written up in the Wall Street Journal was introduced by the Houston Chapter Executive Member Mr. Kaemerz Dotiwalla. Neville's topic was, **"Achieving Success in E-Commerce on a Shoe String."** He regaled the audience with his life experiences in the Internet Industry. Neville's interest in entrepreneurship perked when he saw one of the Zarthushti entrepreneurs in Houston driving around in, "Cool Cars". He also wanted to make money, be independent and not have to depend on anybody for his future progress and success.

Neville had no idea how to get started in business. He overcame this hurdle by reading a lot of books on the lives of entrepreneurs who had made it. Neville took his first plunge into the world of business at the tender age of about 13. He taught himself the then cutting edge technology of Web Design. He built a website at the age of 16 yrs while still in high school. Since then he has developed a number of internet related businesses, some of which sustained him through college and which he still operates.

He also stated that being a member of the Zarthushti community was of great benefit to him as that allowed him to gain Zarthushti mentors who are successful in the business community and who taught him the ropes. I had an opportunity to visit further with Neville after his talk. Some of the things that this young man has done are very interesting, well worthy of a book.

Neville's advice to other young entrepreneurs was:

1. Get a Mentor and don't hesitate to request an expert to be a mentor for you. The Mentor does not need to be in the same business that interests you.
2. Write all your ideas down and develop a niche from the list by a process of elimination.
3. Read a lot; do research on your ideas. For him, books on psychology and how to manage people were more helpful than actual technical books.
4. Once you make some money, establish an investment account and use it for anything to improve you.

Neville suggested that the Chamber develop programs to motivate aspiring entrepreneurs and start a mentorship program.

Our next young entrepreneur was **Aaresh Jamshedji** (left bottom) Whose topic was, **"From Mufflers to Night Club in 7 Short Years?"** Aaresh informed his audience about how at a very young age, he would buy a packet of gum and sell each individual stick of gum to his classmates for a profit.

He helped his parents at their gas station/garage. After graduating from high school, Aaresh purchased a Midas Muffler franchise which was about to go under. The price was right because it was going under. Aaresh spent many long days and turned the business around in a very short time by adding services and products which were not previously provided. At the age of 20, he was the youngest franchisee in Midas's history.

Aaresh's next business venture took root because a friend asked Aaresh to lend \$5000.00 on a car at interest. This led Aaresh into the finance business of buying and carrying notes. This again is his second successful business venture.

Aaresh likes to work hard and play hard. When most of us go to a bar or a disco, we are busy sipping drinks listening to music and cutting the rug. Aaresh did all these things.



World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce



However, he did one additional thing. He counted the number of drinks costing about \$1.50 being sold at \$7.00. This lit the fire in his belly to get into the night club business.

He went around studying various night clubs in town and visualized his dream nightclub. He bought a run down clinic and spent 11 months building the night club with his own hands with the help of his father and brother. There were many days when he would come home so tired and dirty that he would sleep on the floor next to his bed as he had no energy to take a shower and sleep on a clean bed.

Aaresh thanked his grandparents and parents for instilling in him gratitude to Ahura Mazda for blessings. He said that Zarathushti religion has played a major role in his life. Closings for both his businesses were done on March 21st. Jamshedi Naurooz. A divo is always burning at his place of business.

Aaresh was followed by **Ms. Smita Eduljee**, (photo left) an unassuming young professional lady showing great determination. Smita's topic was, **"Making it in a Professional World"**. Smita is presently working for Shell Research, a one time bastion of the good old boy mentality. Smita related to the audience how she ran into a stone wall from her male co-workers especially at the refineries and plants. She conveyed to us how through patience, perseverance and hands on hard work she overcame this resistance, gained respect in their eyes and has made it in a man's world.

She told us about how her interest in chemistry took her from Mama School in Karachi, Pakistan to MIT, and then to Shell Research in Houston. Her story was of special inspiration to our young girls in the field of hard sciences. There were a number of young ladies present at the seminar and she certainly lit a fire for some of them.

As the seminar came to an end, one could see from the enterprising spirit of these young Zarthushti Entrepreneurs that Zarthushti entrepreneurship is not dead. The spirit of Tatas, Wadias, Readymonies, Petits, Godrejs and so many others is still smoldering, waiting for that breath of fresh air to whip it into an inferno of Zarathushti enterprises as it once was. Will WZCC become this breath of fresh air? Additionally, will the charitable nature of our Sethias of old be matched by our new Zarathushti Moguls to reflect their Zarathushti Panu? That will be a test only time will tell.

Ushta Ahamai Kummai Ushta Kammai Chit
Your Houston WZCC Team



LEFT TO RIGHT: Rustom Engineer, Kersi Commissariat, Behroze Daruwalla, Firdosh Mehta, Zarine Commissariat, Neville Medhora, Smita Eduljee, Homi Davier, Dr. Darius Wania, Kaemerz Dotiwalla, Sarosh Collector & Ken Bhappu.

In Search of Zarathustra

The First Prophet And The Ideas That Changed the World

Author Paul Kriwaczek Published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Pages 248 \$25 (cloth) Reviewed by Jehangir Pocha

(A previous version of this article appeared in the Boston Review.)

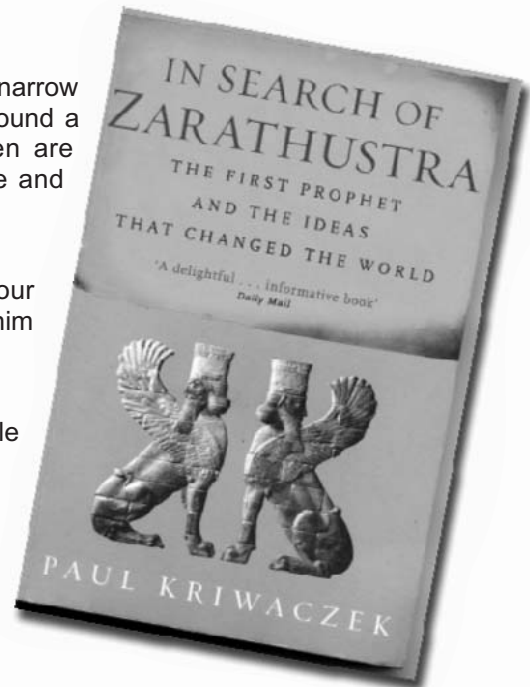
BOOKS
&
ARTS

The distinct staccato sound of chiseling echoes down a narrow alley in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz. Seated around a mass of black stone, a group of young Muslim men are shaping a Farohar—a winged angel from another time and faith, than their own.

"The Farohar is from our past . . . it is a symbol of our greatness," one of the men says haltingly when I ask him for an explanation.

It was a brief insight into one of the most secretive and an ineffable aspect of modern Iran, or Persia, as it was called until 1936.

Despite the tendency to see Iran as an Islamic monolith and the attempts of the ruling clerics in Tehran to cast it as such, the full complexity of Iranian identity is little understood and almost never discussed - even by Iranians themselves.



Though Iran's Islamic leaders has strived for 1300 years to fashion Iran into the purest of Islamic nations, as Paul Kriwaczek writes in his new book "In Search of Zarathustra," it is easy to see that (in Iran) behind the sincere dedication to the Qu'ran there (lies) a hidden stratum of belief, something understood but never mentioned and certainly not to be admitted to an outsider - the spirit of Zarathustra, still powerful after thirteen hundred years of Islam".

What Kriwaczek puts his finger on is something incredibly complex. "In our hearts we are still Zarathusti," a number of Iranians quietly said to me when I traveled through the ancient cities and historical sites Kriwaczek describes in his book. The phenomenon is noticeable to anyone who cares to look closely enough, and until now no writer had the combination of courage, intellectual curiosity and caring to explore the subject.

In Search of Zarathustra is written with the prescient elegance of a curious traveler and artfully reveals how beneath the earnest Islam of modern revolutionary Iran lies the indelible imprint of another incarnation. With his background as a BBC producer and longtime resident of Central Asia, Kriwaczek is well equipped to illustrate the socio-religious dynamics of this phenomenon. It is with a remarkable blend of intellectual inquiry and respect for both Zoroastrianism and Islam that Kriwaczek examines how the Zarathustrian Persian ethos came to be transmuted into Iranian Islam where "inspite of everything, Zarathustra still lives".

The broad swath of modern history generally sees the collapse of the Persian Empire as the classical demise of one civilization at the hands of another, more powerful aggressor. But, as Kriwaczek suggests, a more nuanced reading of history and the reality of modern Iran reveals something else - something that my friend the sculptor was acting out as he crafted a Zarathusti Farohar in that narrow alley.

The simple purity of Islam could not completely stamp out the cultural richness of Persian culture. "Iran was a Zoroastrian country 2000 years before it became Islamic...Zoroastrianism is still ingrained in the Iranian psyche even though it goes by different labels these days," Kriwaczek said to me when I called him in London to discuss his book.



"When you walk into a gift store in Tehran you don't see little replicas of mosques like you see in Pakistan or Egypt. What you see are carvings of Farahars and other Zoroastrian themes."

As one Iranian proudly said to me "When the Arabs went to Egypt they Arabized Egypt, but when they came to Persia, they got Persianized".

Kriwaczek speculates on how and why Zoroastrianism continues to underpin so much of Iranian life: "New converts don't just give up their former spiritual and ethical world-view; they usually bring them along, transferring the old wine into the new bottle." While Persians accepted Islam as their new faith they found ways to preserve their heritage and distinctness from the conquering Arabs.

"Just as in Europe the Holy Roman Empire - 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire,' as Voltaire said - was actually a way for baptized German warlords to repackage their pagan traditions in Christian wrapping, so Iranian Islam came to incorporate Iranian national consciousness, Iranian national pride and, yes, Iranian Zoroastrian beliefs," Kriwaczek writes.

Kriwaczek illustrates this point with examples drawn from Persian architecture and poetry. Comparing two pairs of religious buildings - the first and earlier pair a staid and pious structure, the second a structure of perfect geometry resplendent with animal and bird carvings - Kriwaczek illustrates how Persian arts, culture and science quickly infused Iranian Islam. Orthodox Arabic Islam might hold that it is a sin to depict any living thing. But the innate joie de vivre and artistic traditions of the Persians, whom Zarathushtis had taught to enjoy the good things of life free of guilt, could not be suppressed for long and soon expressed themselves freely in Iranian culture. To this day the intricate carvings and vibrant tilework of Iranian mosques stands in sharp contrast to the sombre piety of their Arabian counterparts.

Kriwaczek also shows that Iranian literary traditions, as personified first by the 12th-century poet Ferdowsi-author of the Shah-nameh, or Book of Kings, the national epic of Iran-and later by the mystic poets Hafez, Sa'adi, and Rumi, are unabashedly pre-Islamic, both in treatment and content. In Shah-nameh Ferdowsi writes that

Zardosht (Zarathustra), the prophet of the Most High, appeared in the land . . .

And showed the people a new faith . . .

He reared throughout the realm a tree with beautiful foliage.

Men rested beneath its branches . . .

(and) became perfect in wisdom and faith.

(Islamists still struggle to understand how a good Muslim like Ferdowsi could say that another prophet than Muhammad could make men "perfect" in faith.)

Unfortunately, while Kriwaczek artfully reveals the Zarathushtrian hinges of Iranian culture, his lack of concrete evidence is a major shortcoming. "Mine is not an academic work" he said to me in explanation. But Kriwaczek also fails to mention the growing interest of many Iranians in their ancient past and faith and the possible repercussions for the country.

Modern Iran has consistently wobbled between the dual and sometimes conflicting pillars that define it: Islam, and what is now euphemistically called Iran's "pre-Islamic heritage." As Iran struggles with change it is increasingly looking at its ancient roots as a way of re-defining itself..

Evidence of popular fascination with Iran's Persian heritage is everywhere. Stone carvings, paintings, and pictures of Persepolis adorn the walls of many homes, office buildings, and restaurants. In dusty bus stations across Iran's desert towns, transport companies have painted Farohars on the sides of their sandblasted buses. Savvy marketers have also begun to tap into the trend. The newest model of the locally made Peugeot sedan in Iran has been branded Pars (Persepolis) and consumer products with names like Parsian line the shelves of Iran's tiny street stores.

"Iranians are trying to discover who they really are," says a women's rights lawyer in Tehran". Numerous surveys, including one by the magazine Asr-e Ma ("Our Era"), have shown that most Iranians under the age of 25 - who make up 50 percent of the overall population - consider themselves agnostic. Many are curious to learn more about Zoroastrian philosophy and history.

There is also growing evidence that at least one disenfranchised group in the region has taken a deep interest in Zoroastrianism - the Kurds.

Kurdish religious practices bear close resemblance in ritual style to the Zarathusti faith. The original religion of the Kurds was Yezidism, a religion greatly influenced by Zoroastrianism, and many Kurds were also Zarathushtis until the Islamic conversions that began in the seventh century. Today, about 25 percent of Kurds still practice Yezidism, which is centered around the town of Lalish in northern Iraq. (Five percent are Jewish and Christian and though 70 percent are Islamic, they hold their religion lightly, practicing a syncretic articulation of the faith that reflects their pre-Islamic past).

According to Dr. Pir Mamou Othman, an expert on Kurdish religious practices, "the Yezidis pray in a way which resembles the prayer-rituals of the Zoroastrians, something especially noticeable in the morning-prayer where the face is turned towards the sun. Their cycle of five prayers also stems from Zoroastrianism, and not from Islam, as is often stated."

There are reports that in the face of persecution from both Shias and Sunnis and their growing political independence, some Kurdish tribes have begun to embrace the Zarathushti religion. In a rare interview on the subject, Mahir Welat-representative of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK) and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to the Russian Federation-said that "For a time the Kurds forgot about their Zoroastrianism roots but now it is our intention to return and to educate ourselves."

It is not completely coincidental that it took a person in Welat's position to make these comments. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, many people in southern Russia and the newly independent Central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, historically part of the Persian Empire, have openly embraced Zoroastrianism.

As these republics struggle to reimagine themselves as sovereign states, they are drawn to their ancient ethnic roots. Leaders of the republics, especially President Imomali Rahmonov of Tajikistan, support the resurgent interest in Zoroastrianism, which they hope might counter the radical Islam that the Saudis and others are trying to export into the region.

Interestingly, Kriwaczek also delves into the haze of unrecorded history to sniff out the amorphous and often anonymous ways that Zarathushti ideas came into, and remain in, the Western canon.

Theologians generally agree that Zoroastrianism profoundly influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam and that the originally Zarathusti notions of monotheism, heaven and hell, the messiah and the apocalypse were absorbed by these later religions.

Kriwaczek goes beyond this to show how Greco-Roman civilization, philosophers from Socrates to Nietzsche, the beginning of the Christian era, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment were all impacted by Zarathustra.

Taking us back to Middle Ages France, Kriwaczek posits that the "Great Heresy" of the 13th century was rooted in the challenge the adoption of Zarathushti philosophy by the French Cathars posed to papal Christianity. With this and his later explication into the belief systems of the Roman Mithras, the prophet Mani, and the 9th century Bulgars, Kriwaczek reveals how Zarathustrian ideas helped shape the Roman and early Christian eras.

If much of this seems surprising to many today it is because time and politics have obscured much of it. Traditional rivalries doomed the Persians to a footnote in Greco-Roman history and the medieval-era eclipse of Zarathustianism by Christianity stamped it out of the European consciousness.

Naturally, the reflections of this linger even in America's own Greco-Roman inspired society. Americans might be surprised to learn that the seven-pointed halo which guilds the Statue of Liberty is linked to the Roman Mithras, which in turn is rooted in the Zarathushti arch-angel Mithra.

It is Kriwaczek's twin investigation into these opposite ends of time - the ancient osmosis of the past that seeded the world with Zarathushtrian ideas and today's quiet resurgence of Zoroastrianism in a world wounded by religious excess and conflict - that gives the book a vital originality. It is a fascinating, if complex, journey and Kriwaczek turns *In Search of Zarathustra* into a veritable time machine as he scours through the forgotten places and pages of history in his quest to understand how the ideas of humanity's first prophet and original philosopher changed the world, as the book is sub-titled.

In *Search of Zarathustra* is also laden with the suggestion that ideas that once changed the world may do so again. Despite its frequent brushes with extinction, Zoroastrianism remains a living and resurgent faith, and Kriwaczek tells us why he believes it could come to be the universal religion many seek for our time.

"As the surface details of different monotheistic faiths cease to be deeply stressed in a multi-cultural world, and we strip Judaism of its traditions, Christianity of its divinity and Islam of its uniqueness what we are left with are the central ideas of Zarathushtra," Kriwaczek writes.

Perhaps this is why the core tenets of the world's oldest revealed religion seem so universally relevant for our modern times.

Jehangir Pocha is editor of India's Business World Magazine.

Paul Kriwaczek will be presenting a two part lecture series on October 19 and 21 2007, at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Centre, Houston, Texas.

THE MOTHER AND OTHER SHORT STORIES

By Khorshed R. Javeri

A book of short stories that has caught the fancy of the reading public. The style is reminiscent of authors like Ruskin Bond and R.K. Narayan-simple but compelling; as are the commonplace characters and situations to which every reader can relate.

The stories have a delightful Parsi flavor. They satisfy in the older reader the yearning for old world values, which sadly today are disappearing before his or her eyes. The young, will by reading them discover the world of their parents and grand parents. A "must-read" that will delight both young and old.

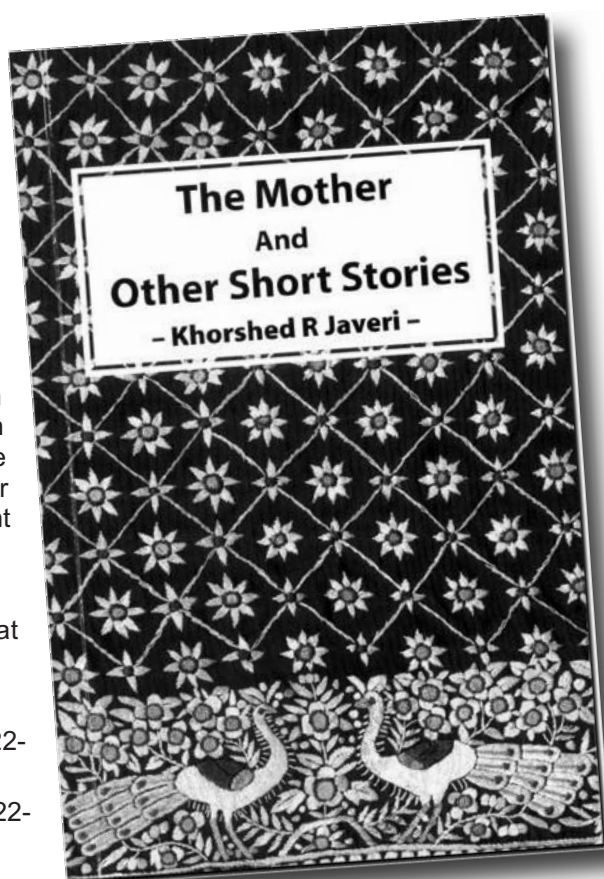
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On Six

Dollars to America

A Tale of Adventure, Courage and Reward

Pages 150; Price \$13.99

Author: Meheroo Jussawalla

Publisher: BookSurge Publishing.

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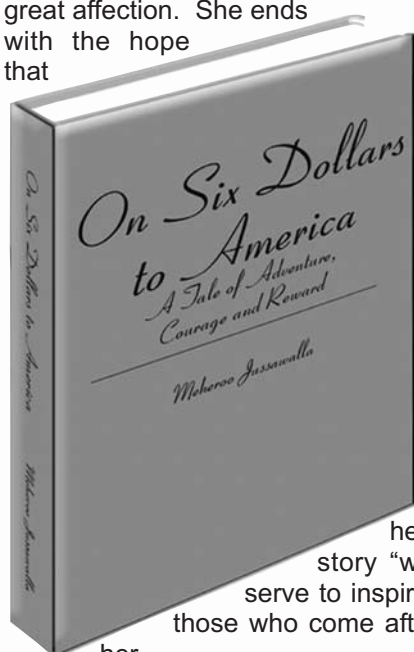
Reviewed by
Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Meheroo Jussawalla has had an interesting life. Having grown up in Secunderabad, in the 1930s, as a "poor cousin" in the wealthy and influential Chenoy family, Jussawalla courageously

overcame personal tragedy, and in the pursuit of academic freedom, immigrated to America in the 1970s with only six dollars to her name. After a two year stint as a professor of International Trade, Comparative Economic Systems and Development Theory at St. Mary's College in Maryland, Jussawalla acquired a job at the East West Center in Hawaii, applying the concepts of growth theory to communications systems, and analyzing the impact of technology on economic development.

Although her assignment at the East West Center intimidated Jussawalla because it was a new area of economics for her, it was the start of an illustrious career in economics. In fact, this is when her many global adventures also began: Her work at the East West Center afforded Jussawalla many opportunities to travel the globe to teach and attend conferences. Her travels included meeting scholars in her field as well as dignitaries such as Pope John Paul II and the Empress of Japan. Today, she is a Professor Emeritus at the Center. For all her trials, Jussawalla's reward has been a most fulfilling life in Hawaii – one she describes with

great affection. She ends with the hope that



her story "will serve to inspire" those who come after her.

Jussawalla has had an interesting life, but, unfortunately, this book does not do it justice. Jussawalla's writing style is too reserved to allow the reader to really get to know her. While her personal trials and tribulations – her father's death when she was only twelve, leaving her family looking to the Chenoy for assistance; the deaths of her in-laws, her husband and her mother, in rapid, freaky succession which brought further heartbreak and financial strain; her daughter's struggle with breast cancer; her unexpectedly happy arranged marriage; her bonds with her daughter and her grandson -- are mentioned, they are not recounted in enough detail to offer insight into

how these experiences molded her character.

The impetus for her migration to America – her "quest for academic freedom" including freedom from gender discrimination – is also difficult to comprehend. She does not provide many examples of the discrimination she faced in India. Indeed, her success in Indian academia, despite the constraints she faced, suggests that she overcame whatever discrimination she faced. But there is little discussion of how she overcame it. Jussawalla makes no secret of her utter disdain for Indira Gandhi and her policies, but this discussion of policies appears to be heavy on opinion, without factual support. Her love of the western world, particularly the US, which was formed during visits to teach in America, while she was a professor in India, is evident. It is a love so strong, that Jussawalla makes no mention of the fact that even as she came to the US, in her quest for academic freedom and equal rights, America was continuing its struggle with these issues as well. Eventually, the book turns into a travelogue of sorts, describing the various travels Jussawalla undertook as part of her work at the East West Center.

In conclusion, this is an interesting book, although it will leave the reader a bit unsatisfied, wondering what it is that the author has held back.

Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi is a member of the Bar of the State of New York and later this year to the Bar of the State of California later this year. Ms. Gandhi is currently on sabbatical. She lives with her husband in Marina del Rey, CA.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor.

I would like to comment on the article "The Forgotten" by Anahita Dua in FEZANA (page #73 Social Justice) about the Palestinians. True the Palestinians were displaced, but so were the Arabs when they had occupied Spain. The country of Israel is a fact and an established democracy and our major and only reliable ally in the middle-east. Several times in the past, the Palestinians were offered an olive branch and full support to build up their infrastructure by Israel and the West.

But Yasser Arafat always refused.

Why? Because it was in his own interest to continue the confrontation! After Arafat, the Palestinians rejected peace with Israel and instead elected Hamas, a party that has on its agenda the destruction of Israel. Under such circumstances I do not blame Israel for doing nothing for the Palestinians. The situation is of the Palestinian leadership's own making. I have seen the Palestine refugee camps in Jordan and Syria. The inhabitants are dispossessed and need to be re-settled, but first they must want peace and not confrontation. As long as they and Iran both want to "push Israel into the sea" things will not improve. Even the late King Hussein of Jordan (a learned and enlightened person) distanced himself from the Palestinians' militancy when he found that supporting them was not in the best interests of his country. Anahita Dua has a flawed perspective on the Palestinian problem. Yes, it is our duty as Zarathushtis to help the downtrodden, but in this case it is in the Zarathushti interest to side with the Israelis bearing in mind recent history. Once the Palestinians embrace peace with Israel their lot will improve.

Ardeshir B. Damania, Davis, CA

RESPONSE: ANAHITA DUA

Frankly speaking, confrontation is inevitable in the face of injustice. It is not enough for Palestinians to want peace; reaching a peaceful agreement between opposing parties demands compromise by both parts.

A point to note is that when the author mentions that Jordan was represented by an enlightened and balanced king who would not support Palestine, one should recall that it was Jordan who annexed what remained of the allotted Arab state in Palestine after the Israeli conflict causing further trauma to a people who simply wanted their freedom. It then closed its border to all Palestinian refugees leaving them trapped in the West Bank. Hence, Jordanian foreign policy regarding Palestine is worthless as the Palestinian best interest in simply not a factor in their decisions.

In terms of Arafat and Hamas: It is very easy to say that the Palestinians do not want peace because they democratically elected a militant regime. I would argue that, to them, Hamas seemed like the only legitimate option to stopping Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan of expulsion. If one can recall the comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his ministers in Dec. 2002 which openly declared that Palestinians must be driven out to make way for Jewish settlements in land occupied illegally since the 1967 war. These statements elicited no response from any power. In fact it has been such an accepted part of Israeli politics that the phrase "population transfer" has been coined to explain this atrocity.

Throwing around words like "peace" and "statehood" is easy, but these principles are useless and flawed if they are not used in conjunction with the words "liberty," "justice," and "equality." Complete concession on behalf of one party is not "peace." Furthermore, no matter what is happening or who is right, under no circumstances is it ever acceptable to starve, murder, exploit, or pillage a population of refugees.



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